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# **ANXIETY AND FAITH**



# ANXIETY AND FAITH

*Toward Resolving Anxiety in Christian Community*

BY CHARLES R. STINNETTE, JR.

Foreword by David R. Hunter



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## FOREWORD

It is no easy undertaking to write a responsible book on the emotional unrest of our time and the resources of the Christian religion. Few writers should attempt it, for very few are capable of treating anxiety and religion without oversimplifying the one and corrupting the other. **ANXIETY AND FAITH** is a notable exception, having been written by a man whose professional life is firmly rooted in both disciplines.

The alacrity with which the usual popular writer in the psychological field diagnoses human difficulty and prescribes for it is a phenomenon of our time surpassed only by our incredible readiness to accept such advice. The recommendation usually boils down to a plea for an act of the will to be performed by the one who is in need, a plea that places the person at the mercy of his own will. In most human situations nothing could be more threatening or more inclined to aggravate the initial difficulty. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, that we seem so receptive to such advice.

Both psychology well grounded in laboratory exploration and theology which is rooted in Christian revelation have something to say to this twofold phenomenon which needs to be heard, albeit the two observations are quite different. What we know and acknowledge about man and what we believe or do not believe about God are determining factors both in the behaviour of the too hasty and superficial diagnostician and in the gullible and hungry receptiveness of the general public—ourselves.

When one says that the proper study of mankind is man,

this wise observation should be balanced with the assertion that the necessary companion of mankind in this study is God and man. If this claim is confusing, it could conceivably be attributable to the basis of the statement in the fundamental nature of God and man. Dr. Stinnette has provided us with a remarkably lucid treatment of this deepest of our needs, a need which can be found in the lives of every one of us.

This book will be helpful, first of all, to priest and minister, and to all who permit themselves to be used as agents in the cure of souls, clergy and laity alike. It will be a source of revealing insight to any teacher who conceives his task as primarily that of enabling the rich resources of our heritage to change and improve the life of the learner now. To the man or woman caught up in the travail of an anxiety neurosis this book will probably speak no more effectively than any other modern work, but at least it will not lead him down a road of delusion which can end only in despair. To the discerning layman who is capable of staying with a book which deals vividly with reality and refuses to offer any easy and alluring escape, **ANXIETY AND FAITH** can provide direction and Christian learning in the best tradition of all that is sound in modern psychology and creedal Christianity.

DAVID R. HUNTER

## PREFACE

Modern man knows anguish of soul in troubled dreams and in the pain of anxiety. There is a tyranny of despair and separation which is too familiar to every one of us. It is a wall of fear, a weight of guilt, and a consuming anger. What is its meaning? How shall we be delivered from its power? In what follows we propose to explore some of the answers to these questions. But no answer can remove the threat of anxiety. It must be faced. Within the Christian community it is possible in moments of faith and love not to banish anxiety, but to live beyond its power.

The interpretation of anxiety has played a crucial role in modern psychology and theology. Freud regarded it as "a nodal point," having significance for many other areas. Indeed anxiety, like freedom, points beyond clinical descriptions to a definition of man. It implies a spiritual capacity which thirsts for meaning. It is here in the total view of man—in the inferences drawn from the fact of anxiety—that psychology and religion must finally settle their differences.

Psychotherapy moves in the direction of man's recovery of himself through communication and human helpfulness. Progress in this comes only after much self-searching. The honest self-examination by modern man in therapy contrasts sharply with some "easy solutions" that glibly bear the name "Christian." Really to be searched and tried by God is a different matter. It is to know that there is no hiding place either in hell *or in heaven*. There is no wide gate nor easy way, but rather a narrow and hard path that leads to life beyond anxiety. It is a broken spirit and a contrite heart

which prepares man to walk that second mile from his own anxious ways to God's mercy and love.

Here is our thesis: Man alone cannot resolve anxiety. He needs others. He needs community. Even more, he needs the kind of community which is sustained by a more than human love. Too many of us have the impression that we may compel the gifts of faith by heroic but individual efforts. If we would have the fruits of the spirit, we must be willing to enter the community of the spirit. And for that gift no man cometh to the Father except by faith. In loneliness and separation men are forever strangers to one another, forever aliens so long as they try to create community out of their own stubborn hearts. But community comes as a gift of God. It comes only in faith. It comes when anxious fears are caught up in the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

I take this opportunity to express my indebtedness to Professors Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, and Horace Friess, of Union Seminary and Columbia University in New York City, who encouraged my study in this field. I am also more than grateful for the help of my beloved friend, now deceased, Professor David Roberts. They planted and I have tended—but the weeds are my responsibility! I have been fortunate in finding sympathetic interest, as well as sound discipline, at the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry in New York. Also I am indebted to many parishioners and colleagues, particularly to the Reverend Canon Theodore O. Wedel and to the good people who listened with patience when this material was given as a lecture series to "The Christianity and Modern Man" forum at the Washington Cathedral. Also, I owe a debt of gratitude to my wife, whose patient reading removed many, though not all, flaws in the text. Finally, I am thankful to the Reverend Dr. David R. Hunter for writing the Foreword and to Margaret Lockwood, who has prepared the manuscript for publication.

This book is not intended as a substitute for self-searching—either in prayer or in explicit therapy. It is intended to expose some of the “dead end” ways we choose under the threat of anxiety. “Perplexed, but not driven to despair,” the Christian may yet be enabled to endure his anxiety—by sharing it in the community of faith and thus come again to the confidence of the Psalmist:

I sought the Lord and He answered me,  
And delivered me from all my fears (Psalm 34:4).

CHARLES R. STINNETTE, JR.



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## *Anxiety and Faith*

O Holy Spirit, through whom the walls of loneliness are shattered and our community in faith is made manifest, clothe us with the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Thou hast gathered us together out of our solitary ways. Thou dost give beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning. So strengthen us with faith for anxiety that we may stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free.

(Based on Isaiah 61:1-3 and  
Galatians 5:1)



***Part I***

**MAN'S EFFORT TO  
UNDERSTAND ANXIETY**



## ANXIETY AND THE WHOLE MAN

When Hamlet declares that conscience makes cowards of us all, he could be voicing a cherished conviction of this age. For modern man is troubled. And his inner turmoil he expresses in the distorted patterns of his life. He seems in many ways broken and spent before his time. In one instance he is a man, driven and twisted by a debilitating hostility; in another he is deformed and immobilized by guilt feelings. Or she is a woman whose inner chaos drives her to seek help, but whose panic prevents her facing her real problem. They are all cowards. Yet they are also the ordinary people of this moment in history, of whom Auden speaks in his aptly entitled *The Age of Anxiety*, as

. . . phantoms who try  
through much drink by magic to restore  
the primitive pact with pure feeling.<sup>1</sup>

What is anxiety? Poet, philosopher, and clinician have struggled to give an adequate description of this night of man's soul. Yet to modern psychiatry belongs the distinction of having the eyes and the ears which have recorded most clearly the picture of anxiety. The condition is one that has

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Auden, *The Age of Anxiety* (New York: Random House, 1947), p. 10. Used by permission of the publisher.

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always been a part of man's experience; and it remains. "In the world," said Christ, "you have tribulation" (John 16:33). The German Bible uses here the word *angst*, the root of which lies embedded in our word *anxiety*. The reference suggests that the same human experience which has been of great concern to modern psychiatry and theology is common to man as man.

To answer the question, What is anxiety?, we must explore some of the current theories of its origin that have been put forward in psychiatry and theology. While we must keep in mind that these two disciplines approach the problem quite differently, we can, nevertheless, establish correlations between the two. On the deeper level, the question drives us beyond those easy and pat remedies for anxiety which sometimes bear the description "Christian." The convinced Christian knows that the answer to the problem of anxiety comes only with the courage to face its contradictory aspects—guilt and hostility. In terms of faith this means waiting, waiting with self-searching before the God of our salvation.

An immediate hazard in the effort to deal with the problem before us is the broad and indefinite use of the term *anxiety*. It is used in theological writing to describe that feeling of *dread* and *fear* which man experiences in the possibility of his separation from God. The same term is used in clinical medicine to indicate the experience of stress that accompanies emotional disturbance and a host of bodily disorders. We shall use the term *anxiety* in the sense conveyed by its German correlative, *angst*, which referred originally to a strait or a narrow passage, such as would restrict breathing. It should be added that anxiety, as an anonymous and "free floating" threat to his existence, is experienced by man in his totality. For anxiety, as distinguished from fear, is that condition which fails to discern its object, whereas fear is directly related to its object. Karen Horney makes this clear distinction:

Fear and anxiety are both proportionate reactions to danger, but in the case of fear the danger is a transparent, objective one and in the case of anxiety it is hidden and subjective.<sup>2</sup>

Hence a postman who avoids a particular dog for quite understandable reasons may be said to fear, for the object, in this instance, is clear. But a man in whom the very sight of any dog arouses violent feelings and a desire to run away is in the grip of anxiety. The sight of a dog—any dog—is enough to set in motion seemingly unfounded and unmanageable anxiety.

As we shall see later, much of the emphasis of psychotherapy is directed toward the goal of uncovering and evaluating the real and deeply buried object of anxiety. This is also a major task of Christian theology. To be sure, the question, Why are we anxious?, has become, in this day of great fear, a popular subject both for tabletalk and for community discussion. When the members of a church discussion group were asked recently to list the *manifestations* and the *causes* of anxiety in our daily life, their response demonstrated the difficulty of matching manifestation with cause. Some of the manifestations were: indecisiveness, escapism, busyness, dissatisfaction, impatience, meaninglessness, desire to be liked, shallowness, and a frantic grasping for religious answers! The causes given were not so numerous: possible war, insecurity, loneliness, guilt, death, and competitiveness. These people reveal in their answers the deep furrow anxiety has ploughed through modern life. They also remind us of our ineffectiveness before its threat.

#### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WHOLENESS

"But, Chaplain, my arms will not obey when my head says 'stop'!" The speaker was a young and attractive ser-

<sup>2</sup> Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality in Our Time* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1937), pp. 43-44.

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geant in an overseas army hospital. When brought to the hospital, he was suffering from a gross tremor in both arms. He felt quite bewildered by his continued symptoms, and he insisted with a smile that he had "no problems, no worries." He was the only son of a father incapacitated by tuberculosis and of an "overworked" mother. Like most other civilian soldiers, he looked forward to the day when he could go home. But the genuineness of his symptoms was unquestionable. Since several interviews revealed no conscious conflicts and since time and limited facilities precluded longer treatment, the psychiatrist decided to administer a hypnotic drug and to question the patient during the period of hypnosis. (Narcosynthesis was widely used in brief therapy during the war.) The sergeant was eager to cooperate in this. During the first narcosynthesis the patient revealed that he had known a man who was permanently afflicted with tremor. After great agitation, a second narcosynthesis brought forth the fact that he was very much worried about his mother, who was having to manage a huge ranch without the necessary help. The sergeant feared that his mother's health would be permanently damaged. He had repressed this fear, as well as his desire to do something about it, because he "did not wish to ask for special favors."

A day later the sergeant presented quite a different picture in interview. He was no longer smiling, but the tremor was gone. He was worried and spoke painfully of the cause of his worry. The only physical symptom now, apart from his general appearance, was "a slight heartburn." He was now "facing the facts," which, he seemed to realize, was the cost of the removal of the tremor. With the assistance of the Red Cross, the sergeant was returned home on a "dependency discharge" a few days later.

The case of this sergeant vividly demonstrates that unity of mind and body that has regained wide acceptance in modern thinking. Although he was unaware of the cause

of his symptoms, they nevertheless expressed a matter of great concern to him. While the sergeant "forgot" his concern, his body "remembered." That man in his functioning is an indivisible unit, is a working axiom in the field of human understanding today. Franz Alexander, in a research paper on psychosomatic medicine, points to this process by which anxious concerns get transformed into bodily manifestations (hysterical conversion) as an illustration, *in fact*, of the unity of mind and body. Many ulcer sufferers have noticed that a period of strain coincides with a flare-up in pain. The implication is clear: man is a psychosomatic whole. Wear and tear of any kind affects the whole man.

#### **WHY DOES SEPARATION OCCUR?**

It is a striking fact that in most primitive cultures the functions of priest and physician are frequently combined. It is as if man knew in the innermost recesses of his being that neither his spiritual life nor his bodily needs can be isolated and ignored. It is unfortunately true, however, that the history of medicine has been the record of a persistent growing apart of the spiritual and physical aspects of man's life, as the gap widened between priest and physician. This tendency to fragment man is due to many factors, such as philosophical opinions that operate on the assumption that the only real world is the world of observable phenomena, as well as to the nature of the experimental method that science develops as a genuine tool. The separation of priest and physician may be further understood as an inevitable component of the struggle for freedom by medical science against the authoritarian power of the Church. For these and other reasons the isolation and anxiety of man have been emphasized by therapies that have dealt too long with only a part of the whole man. The fact that both scientific and theological thinking have today turned again to the concept of wholeness does not remove immediately the problems that years of isolation and separation have left behind.

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It is important to keep in mind that biblical man is an indivisible unity. The Bible does not split man into component parts. That man is, that he is a *living soul*, carries with it the assumption that his personality is whole. The Old Testament scholars are agreed that dualism has no application to Hebrew psychology and that each bodily function, be it *nephesh* (breath) or the heart, is but a different aspect of the unity of personality. The expression of this wholeness is contained in the pivotal commandment in Deuteronomy (6:5): ". . . and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."<sup>3</sup> As in obedience to the commandment, so in sin also, man's unity within himself, as well as his solidarity with his people, is maintained. Thus the prophet could exclaim:

Ah! sinful nation, guilt laden people . . . the whole head is ailing, and the whole heart is sick (Isaiah 1:4a and 5b, Goodspeed).

The New Testament is at one with the Old in this matter of man's unity. Greek dualism had little influence upon it. Man there is redeemed not merely by pious acts, but by responding as a whole person to Christ and by entering the community of the Holy Spirit, the Church. That new life is one of relationship: I-Thou. It speaks the language of faith, which is the language of wholes. And the Church in her Creeds is primarily concerned with a living affirmation of the whole man, "I believe in . . ." We shall focus upon the Christian view of wholeness in relation to anxiety in later chapters. Here we desire only to call attention to the wholeness of man in the biblical perspective.

The revolution that broke the medieval synthesis seriously challenged that ancient unity also. Disturbing forces

<sup>3</sup> Scriptural quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible (copyright 1946 and 1952).

Quotations from the Psalter, unless otherwise noted, are from the Book of Common Prayer.

had been at work for centuries before the storm broke, creating a growing tradition of philosophy and life in which mind and body were separated. While not all philosophy became dualistic, many philosophers moved in that direction in their effort to stand off and view life in a passive, spectatorial manner. Behind their attempt was the assumption that there is in man a separate entity, mind or soul, which observes and records, but which is not involved in the actual process of growth and change. Philosophically, modern man's fate was decided by that underlying assumption. It was an easy step thence to the view that the only real world is the physical world of observable phenomena. Secularism, a "this world only" view, was the dark horse of the Enlightenment. Despite their personal concern with spiritual matters, Galileo and Descartes were the fathers of modern materialism by virtue of the fact that they relegated man's spirit to a place of relative unimportance. Both Locke and Kant struggled with the problem, only to discover an impassable gulf between the observing mind and the world described by science. This view, which tries to restrict all knowledge to the mathematics derived from observable phenomena, still persists in some circles to challenge the unity of man that psychosomatic study has recovered.

#### TOWARD RECOVERED UNITY

The rise of biology as a science in the nineteenth century, with its view of all life as the product of interaction between environment and organism, opened the way for the rediscovery of man's unity. If he is more than a well-oiled machine that functions automatically, man's attitudes and motives must again enter the picture. The heart may have reasons that the mind does not know. Every view of man must take into consideration the fact that bodily life is not merely physical, nor is mental life merely psychic. The way has been opened again to see man as a whole, to see him as the biblical picture delineates him. "The eye is the lamp of

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the body," Christ has said. And by that light or by that darkness, as the case may be, the whole of man, both body and spirit, is known.

By contrast, the Victorian Age fixed a vast gulf between attitudes and behavior. Indeed, when motives got uncomfortably close to awareness, ladies resorted to the "polite faint," and gentlemen took a tighter reign on their discipline of repression. This was grist for a genius like Sigmund Freud! The view of man widely accepted today was formulated some years ago by John Dewey when, speaking before a medical society, he suggested that the old phrase, "A sound mind in a sound body," should be recast to read, "A sound human being in a sound human environment."

The psychology of wholeness still encounters difficulties within the medical profession. There are still some who say that "either the body is sick, or there is nothing wrong." But how can so prejudiced a view understand the problem of anxiety? The illness arises precisely in the area in which mind and body meet. We gather, however, that attitudes in medical circles have been changing since Gregory Zilboorg wrote: "Medicine had less differences with the medieval barbers who practiced surgery than it has today with psychiatry."<sup>4</sup>

A most puzzling question is, perhaps, why religious thinkers who hold the basic conviction that the unseen reality is operative in nature and supremely so in man, accepted the tragic partition of man into such divisions as spiritual and physical. Carried to its logical conclusions, such a view would certainly undermine the doctrine of the Incarnation and render the sacraments meaningless. This dichotomy was a serious pitfall for both medicine and religion. Its consequent destruction of man's unity led medicine into an extreme specialization that failed to treat the whole man; it also made religion irrelevant to the real world. As

<sup>4</sup> Gregory Zilboorg, *History of Medical Psychology* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1941), p. 521. Used by permission of the publisher.

early as the turn of the century, William James was warning, in *Varieties of Religious Experience*, that the "mind-cure" sects that were then spreading at a rapid pace throughout the world were man's spontaneous answer to his own sickness. When traditional religion failed to heal man in his depths, new sects arose to do the task. Despite the dominance of views that ignored a large area of man's being, new ways to express his wholeness in worship were found. Again, wisdom in the heart of man goes her way, ignoring the artificial barriers that man constructs. For, what is planted deep in the soul of man wills to come alive—"deep calls to deep." Its voice will be heard!

This brief excursion into the psychology of wholeness should give emphasis to the place of anxiety in man's understanding of himself. Anxiety dwells in man's spirit, and it speaks through his every motion. Today it expresses itself in a headache, tomorrow in a paralyzing fear. It will not "stay put," precisely because man is not fixed. He is a creature brought to life by the breath of God. The picture of anxiety is one of constant motion, just as life is motion—and decision! We turn now to a brief account of the effort of psychiatry to describe and interpret that picture.

#### UNCONSCIOUS MOTIVATION IN ANXIETY

Even before Freud, men of imagination in science and in literature had come to the conclusion that hysterical symptoms have meaning. It is Freud's merit that he organized his observations around the basic postulate that psychic processes are strictly determined and that thoughts, feelings, and actions are motivated by unconscious emotional forces. The significant discovery that motives exist outside of awareness and that they play an important role in human behavior is one of his lasting contributions. The earliest description of psychoanalysis at work is to be found in that famous collection of *Case Studies in Hysteria*, which Freud wrote in collaboration with Joseph Breuer. In the

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cases both of Anna O. and Lucy R. unconscious factors were operative in the symptoms presented, and it was found that these submerged factors could only be uncovered by the circuitous route of much talk and a process of inquiry that one patient described as "chimney sweeping" and a "talking cure." It is interesting to note that, in this early work, the authors were sensitive to the effects of the conditions of life and of the patients' tendencies toward phantasy, factors which were destined to play important roles in the later development of psychoanalysis.

In his later writings Freud developed the concept of the unconscious and demonstrated its manifestation in dream, phantasy, and the patient's analysis of his errors. Indeed, the technique of *free association*, by which the patient progressively reveals the contents of his unconscious life, became a standard procedure in psychotherapy. This concept of the unconscious has come to be widely used in understanding human behavior, not only in psychology, but also in religion, anthropology, ethics, and in other fields.

### EARLIER INFLUENCES

Another important discovery by Freud which we must have in mind as we describe anxiety is that earlier influences continue to be operative in a person's later life, but in ways that have been well hidden from consciousness. Childhood patterns of reaction are active in adult life. And the rejected child is likely to continue to feel and act rejected as an adult. Indeed, Freud's early efforts to explain anxiety phobias and obsessions resulted in his conclusion that they are "defensive reactions" which protect the individual from bearing in his conscious mind underlying self-reproaches and intolerable ideas.<sup>5</sup> The continued influence of infantile reac-

<sup>5</sup> Sigmund Freud, "The Defense of Neuro-Psychosis," in *Collected Papers* (London: The International Psycho-Analytical Library), Vol. I, CH. IV. All quotations from the *Collected Papers* are used by permission of the publisher.

tions and their significance in personality development has provided the point of departure for dynamic psychology, a psychology that goes beyond Freud. Harry Stack Sullivan, for example, holds that the self is made up of "reflected appraisals" and that those restraints on the child's freedom necessary for his socialization bring about the evolution of "self-dynamism" with its dissociated, as well as conscious, aspects in the adult personality. Erich Fromm, however, holds a view of personality that is basically conceived in terms of the specific kind of relatedness that the individual bears toward the world rather than in terms of his satisfaction of specific instincts, as did Freud. Hence, in Fromm's view, this *relatedness* is established in the child's relations to parental figures, who may all too frequently frighten and confuse the child by their methods until he is forced to deny his own feelings. Thus Fromm writes: "The child starts with giving up the expression of his feeling and eventually gives up the very feeling itself."<sup>6</sup> Such sacrifices are not made without cost, and as we shall later see, the cost is the hostility and anxiety of later life.

#### DESCRIPTIONS OF ANXIETY

For the description of anxiety, we must begin with the clinical picture which Freud set forth in his early monograph, *The Anxiety Neurosis* (1894). It appears that in Freud's mind there was from the beginning some correlation between the constricting and inhibiting experiences of anxiety, and the feeling associated with the narrow passage through which the child passes in birth. But it was not until much later that Freud interpreted anxiety as a symbolic reproduction of the trauma of birth, the experience which becomes the prototype of all occasions when life is endangered. In an early paper on anxiety-neurosis, Freud described it

<sup>6</sup> Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1941), p. 242. Used by permission of the publisher.

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clinically as a condition displaying “general irritability” and “anxious expectation” grouped around the central symptom of “morbid anxiety.” Freud regarded the element of anxious expectation as an unfailing component. He wrote:

We may perhaps say that there is here a *quantum of anxiety in a free floating condition*, which in any state of expectation controls the selection of ideas, and is ever ready to attach itself to any suitable ideational content.<sup>7</sup>

The important fact in this clinical picture is that anxiety displays a “free floating” character and thus may appear in many forms. Freud recognized and listed more than a dozen types of anxiety-attack; but we can today multiply that list many times. In the case, cited earlier, of the sergeant, anxiety was expressed through gross tremor. But in most cases it appears in less dramatic, although equally persistent, forms. In the reports of those listing their own symptoms, these elements always seem to be present: a feeling of indefinite, objectless fear that always threatens to overcome them, a sense of danger out of all proportion to the actual situation at hand, and a heartbreaking inability to discover the cause of and remedy for it in effective action. And one may feel all these things under the stimulus of a minor crisis or even without a crisis.

For the most part, anxiety operates to restrict living. As Lavinia puts it, in T. S. Eliot’s *The Cocktail Party*, “Always on the verge of some wonderful experience and it never happened.” A kind of pervasive anxiety grips many people today. For them life never comes off. Anticipation is never fulfilled in experience. As time goes by, they no longer sense even anticipation. They shuffle through a macabre dance of living that is not living and are ever haunted by a vague threat that can never be identified.

<sup>7</sup> Freud, *Collected Papers*, I, 80. Used by permission of the publisher.

### INTERPRETATIONS OF ANXIETY

It has been said that one of the greatest contributions of Freud to the study of human behavior is that he taught men how to observe. He equipped men, so to speak, with the eyes and the ears to record the clinical picture of anxiety. He trained them to see below the surface of the physical and to hear unspoken, but significant, words. In the language of the spirit, we may say that Freud was able to see, as few men have seen, the *signs* that point to the mighty struggle that goes on within the soul of man. The history of Freud's successive interpretations of anxiety is the history of the psychoanalytic movement for nearly fifty years. In some respects it is not unlike the history of theological development in religious thought, in that while it is packed with disputes and variant schools, it is gaining all the while vast experience with which to meet the problems of human behavior. For our purposes we need only briefly indicate the main interpretations that have influenced recent thinking about anxiety.

In his first description of anxiety, Freud seems to have accepted Breuer's thesis that "hysterical patients suffer principally from reminiscences."<sup>8</sup> Two years later, in 1894, Freud attempted on his own to explain the origin of phobias and obsessions as defenses against an unbearable idea that had been repressed.<sup>9</sup> But in 1896, he concluded that "obsessions are always reproaches re-emerging in a transmuted form under repression, reproaches which invariably relate to a sexual deed performed with pleasure in childhood."<sup>10</sup> Thus Freud moved in the direction of the formulation of his first view of anxiety. It is due, he said in effect, to the

<sup>8</sup> Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer, "On the Psychical Mechanisms of Hysterical Phenomena," *Collected Papers* (London: Hogarth Press), I, 29.

<sup>9</sup> Freud, "The Defense of Neuro-Psychosis," *ibid.*, I, 72.

<sup>10</sup> Freud, "Further Remarks on the Defense of Neuro-Psychosis," *ibid.*, I, 162.

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repression of impulses of a sexual nature which, when prevented from discharge, produce physical tension and are transformed into anxiety. Freud's statements concerning the evolution of anxiety are cast in language reminiscent of that of a physicist dealing with the law of conservation of energy. Anxiety originates in every instance automatically through a process of economy. It is due to "the deflection of somatic sexual excitation from the psychical field and . . . an abnormal use of it due to this deflection."<sup>11</sup> Men and women in forced or voluntary continence are living under conditions likely to produce anxiety.

Firm in his conviction that sex repression is at the base of anxiety, Freud developed his theory of *libido*, which he conceived as a force of "variable quantity" by which sexual processes and transformations could be measured. Libido, diverted by repression from its usual course, reappears in anxiety symptoms that are, in some measure, "surrogates" for the specific activity that would otherwise follow upon sexual excitation. Indeed, Freud regarded anxiety symptoms as symbols of the patient's misdirected sexual activity, and in his "General Remarks on Hysterical Attacks" (1909), he described hysterical attacks as "coitus-like." In *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, Freud elaborated upon the themes of sexual aberrations, infantile sexuality, and the transformations of puberty. There he rounded out his sex theory by marking off the child's developmental stages according to his sexual orientation: oral, anal-sadistic, or genital. Since we are only concerned with Freud's interpretation of the origin of anxiety as sexual, we need not consider more fully his theories of sex, except to note that the whole structure rests upon the assumption of a specific "libido instinct," present from the beginning of life.

It is important to note that although Freud regarded himself throughout his career as a natural scientist with no

<sup>11</sup> Freud, "Justification for Detaching from Neurasthenia a Particular Syndrome: The Anxiety Neurosis," *ibid.*, I, 97.

message for mankind, his respect for his task and his unwillingness to refrain from saying unpopular things made him a prophet to his generation. In 1898, when he was receiving sharp and, in most cases, unjust criticism for his frank discussion of sex, he struck back in words packed with angry conviction:

The opposition of a generation of physicians who can no longer remember their own youth must be broken down, the pride of fathers who are unwilling to descend to the level of common humanity in the eyes of their children will have to be overcome, the unreasonable prudery of mothers who at present quite generally regard it as an incomprehensible and also undeserved stroke of fate that "just their children should be nervous," would have to be met.<sup>12</sup>

But Freud's view that in the psychic economy there is a simple and direct relation between sexual repression and anxiety still failed to explain many problems of human behavior. Freud was deeply disturbed by the fact that the hostility and aggression in the individual seemed to move inexorably into modern warfare. It seemed that collective man had chosen the way of mass suicide, and by the end of the First World War Freud began to revise his theory of anxiety. Two of his disciples, Jung and Adler, had already challenged some of his basic assumptions and had established new schools of psychology. One reason for Freud's revision of his early anxiety theory may lie in the fact that, although he had actively opposed all religious answers and had avoided anything which might suggest *a way of life*, he was forced by actual experience to realize that the depths of man's tragedy is more profound than the attribution of it to a "somatic demand" indicates. Gregory Zilboorg, in *Mind, Medicine and Man*, made an observation that Freud himself

<sup>12</sup> Freud, "Sexuality in the Actiology of the Neurosis," *ibid.*, I, 239. Used by permission of the publisher.

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later admitted; namely, that Freud's discoveries about human behavior were in fact the counterpart in dynamic psychology of the doctrine of original sin.

Specifically it was Freud's concern with hostility and aggression that led to the development of his second theory of anxiety. During the First World War he had opportunity to study extensively the relation of hostility and compulsive activity in war neurosis. His reflections and clinical experience brought him to the conclusion that to the instincts of hunger and sex an "aggressive instinct" must be added. In Freud's view this aggressive instinct functions to protect the individual from a deeply buried tendency toward self-destruction. Indeed, Freud maintained that a tendency toward self-destruction, or a "death instinct," is never absent in any vital human experience. In order to survive, man counters his own self-destructive impulses with those of hostility and aggression which, despite social curbs, explode in individual and social reactions. Freud writes:

The limitation of aggression is the first and perhaps the hardest sacrifice which society demands from the individual. The setting up of the super-ego, which makes the dangerous aggressive impulses its own, is like introducing a garrison into a province that is on the brink of rebellion.<sup>13</sup>

Along with adding the assumption of the death instinct, Freud stressed in his revised interpretation the indefinite and pervasive character of anxiety. He now interpreted anxiety as the fear of those impulses, the discovery of which would involve the subject in external danger. The recognition of hostility (this latter Freud regarded as the counter of the death instinct) constitutes for the subject such a danger, since it immediately raises the possibility of counter-attack by one's fellows. Thus the real object of anxiety re-

<sup>13</sup> Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1933), p. 151. Used by permission of the publisher.

mains unknown to the individual since this object is the hostility and the aggressive impulses which would render him helpless before the power of society, were they to come into consciousness. The primal experience behind these impulses, in Freud's view, is the "remembered and anticipated situation of helplessness," the prototype of which is the helplessness of the infant entirely dependent upon his parents. Accordingly, the adult experience of anxiety recapitulates the trauma of birth and is accompanied by the same pain and helplessness.

In his second theory of anxiety Freud did not give up his view of the instinctive origin of anxiety, inasmuch as he continued to postulate a death instinct at the base of life. But he was forced to revise his view of the simple mechanical relation of sex repression to anxiety and to take into account the person's primal experience and relations. Whereas for Freud the interpersonal factors served simply as vehicles for the expression of instinctual drives, other observers have regarded them as important in the origin of anxiety itself.

An important question remains unanswered in Freud: Why does the anxious adult in his relation to other people continue to act as if he were still in the infantile state of helplessness? The findings of cultural anthropologists have suggested a part of the answer to this question. By living in the midst of other cultures and by observing the infinite ways in which every culture shapes and forms the character of its people, these anthropologists have directed our interest to the forces that mold man in our civilization. Ruth Benedict, for example, in *Patterns of Culture*, draws attention to the fact that every culture has a word for "heathen" or "outsider"; and it usually identifies its own implicit attitudes as the attitudes of *man*. It follows that every culture fashions the individual personality in terms of its own values, its own motif, and its own norm. Thus, if we are to understand why the adult continues to act and feel as a helpless child, we must see him not only as an individual with instinctual ego

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needs, but as a person whose attitudes have been fashioned by the culture in which he is reared. That fashioning impresses upon the infant the prevailing attitudes, whether of anxiety or of calmness and trust, that surround him while he is brought into the world, fed, handled, taught, punished, and rewarded. In short, these prevailing attitudes will reflect, through infinite contacts, the experience of that culture in love and tenderness, as well as in anxiety, hostility, and guilt, all of which the individual has made his own by empathy. It is obvious that *this* culture, which is continuous with Freud's, leaves modern man feeling helpless, and thus anxious. He is "a stranger and afraid" in a world he "never made." This appreciation of the profound influence of culture on the inner springs of man's life provides the basis for a deeper view of man, as well as of his society and of his faith community.

Psychiatrists have since developed the dynamic interpretation, beyond Freud's, to include the interpersonal factor as a present reality in neurosis and the cultural factor as an influencing agent. Karen Horney has suggested that Freud's explanation of anxiety as the repetition of an original anxiety accompanying the birth experience is an instance of his mechanical way of thinking; and she holds that with the passing of the assumption that instinctual drives modified only by environment are at the base of anxiety, the way is open to study "life conditions" as its cause. Horney would reject the assumption that psychoanalysis has "depth" only if it establishes a mechanical connection with infantile drives. While admitting the importance of unconscious motivations in repressed strivings, feelings and fears, Horney, in *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*, emphasizes the present role of these repressed strivings in the actual and present life conditions of the patient. She also regards anxiety as an emotional response to danger which, unlike fear, is diffuse and indefinite; but in her view the danger lies in the core of the personality which has been shaped by the person's living

conditions, by the structure of his personality, and by his values in terms of love, work, convictions, possessions, and reputation. In *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (which, perhaps not without significance for the major thesis, I find myself at times twisting into "the neurotic culture in our personality"!), Horney concludes that anxiety arises "in general not so much from a fear of our impulses as from fear of our repressed impulses."<sup>14</sup>

While acknowledging his debt to Freud on many occasions, Fromm puts forward the more recent dynamic interpretation of personality structure in contrast to the older biological and mechanical views. Whereas the Freudian view regards man as existing in a closed world with more or less fixed relations in terms of basic instincts, Fromm regards personality structure as the result of the kind of "relatedness" which the individual establishes with regard to himself, to others, and to his world. Fromm would use the early formulations and clinical observations of Freud, but not his interpretations.

Fromm's main thesis is that, as man emerges from a primitive oneness with the tribe and nature and as he gains his freedom, he is faced with the necessity of uniting with his fellows and the world on a higher level in spontaneous love and productive work. The alternative to this is the loss of his freedom and integrity, since anxiety accompanies his newly won "*freedom from*" bondage and drives him relentlessly on either to give up that unbearable freedom or to realize his "*freedom to*" achieve individuality. In a striking passage, Fromm mentions the biblical myth of man's expulsion from paradise as representing the fundamental relation between man and freedom:

He (the free Adam) is alone and free, yet powerless and afraid. The newly won freedom appears as a curse;

<sup>14</sup> Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), p. 75.

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he is free from the sweet bondage of paradise, but he is not free to govern himself, to realize his individuality.<sup>15</sup>

Hence paradise lost cannot be regained, but in his "freedom to" actualize his capacities for self-realization, man is challenged by a vision more satisfying than a return to paradise.

As might be expected, Fromm presupposes a humanistic ethic as the basis for man's striving for self-realization. His writings are packed with a zeal reminiscent of the prophets of Israel. His analysis of the lack of social wholeness and of the manifold ways in which man attempts to escape his freedom is based upon a profound understanding of the condition of modern man. Even though the picture is dark, Fromm believes man can correct it for himself. He regards anxiety as a culturally determined product that exists in almost direct proportion to the degree of "unlived life." Man's health lies in the direction of greater expression of selfhood.

Harry Stack Sullivan, however, has put *interpersonal relations* at the very heart of his interpretation of psychiatry. For Sullivan, anxiety has its origins in the interpersonal relations through which one has come to be a person—interpersonal relations which date from the moment of birth. Sullivan makes much of the *distortion* that the child suffers early in life.<sup>16</sup> This distortion comes from two sources: the child's own helplessness and the unhealthy attitudes of parental figures, primarily of the mother. And throughout life it continues to interfere with awareness, to block emotions, and to limit the enjoyment of living. Sullivan points to

<sup>15</sup> Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, pp. 34-35. Used by permission of the publisher.

<sup>16</sup> Harry Stack Sullivan, *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1953).

Sullivan uses the term *parataxic distortion* to describe the initial discrimination between the self and the world that comes about through the child's early experience in interpersonal relations. From that *parataxic distortion* is built up the "vast development of actions, thoughts, foresights, etc., which are calculated to protect one from a feeling of insecurity and helplessness . . ."

the enormous role that anxiety plays in modern life, as evidenced by the prevalence of inefficient work and play and by the elaborate obsessional patterns and rituals. But Sullivan also holds that even as man becomes anxious in the area of his relation to other people, so also his health is to be regained through emotionally satisfying and re-creating interpersonal relations. Such a view of illness and health, including as it does the "biology and pathology of interpersonal relations," has proved to be a meeting ground not only for differing approaches within psychiatry, but also for as widely divergent disciplines as theology, law, and education.

Sullivan points out that the infant is born in too immature a state to live by its own "functional activity" and that in this helplessness the feeling of being "mothered" is his first vivid impression. It is here that anxiety has its origin, for by "empathetic observation" the child reflects the appraisal of his mother. If she is disapproving, even silently so, her feelings are communicated by empathy to the child. Anxiety results and, all too often, is luxuriantly reinforced by life experience. In Sullivan's view anxiety is a tool, like the infant's cry or the child's constipation, that keeps the individual from becoming aware of his intolerable loss of self esteem. It gradually restricts personal awareness in a wide area, and as a result many impulses, desires, and needs come to exist dissociated from the self. If along the way in infancy, childhood, or pre-adolescence a good relation with a nurse, a teacher, or a parental figure has been established, it is likely that anxiety will be sharply reduced. But tragically enough, many people never reach the stage of maturity with the capacity to love and to be loved, because a reflected low respect for the self has long since paralyzed their growth.

It can be seen from this brief survey of recent interpretations of anxiety that Freudianism has been modified to take into account the cultural and interpersonal factors.

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Other writers, like Rollo May in *The Problem of Anxiety*, have brought together these varying interpretations, but more with reference to the clinical picture than to the religious meaning. This glimpse of the effort of psychiatry to understand anxiety must now be placed against the broader canvas of man's effort to see his total life in faith.

### S U M M A R Y

In this chapter we have attempted to describe anxiety and to cover some of the important interpretations of its origin and social manifestations. Perhaps the most outstanding characteristic of anxiety is the helplessness that it inflicts upon the individual. He is at the mercy of a driving force which robs life of satisfaction and fulfillment. In this respect anxiety may be compared to panic reactions, which are characterized by multiple, disorganized, and meaningless responses. Anxiety mechanisms likewise display this ineffective and disoriented character. A panic-stricken person is usually immobilized before the real object of danger, and the anxiety-ridden person cannot come to deal with the real cause of his condition. Anxiety is a slow, but persistent, terror with an underside of self-rejection and hostility that is only vaguely indicated by the title of Menninger's book, *Man Against Himself*.

As a factor in social conditions, anxiety tends to perpetuate itself through the prevailing attitudes that shape the individual's development in family and community. Here is a disturbed Negro soldier from the South, who aroused his fellows in the night with the scream, "Don't get the wrong idea! Don't get the wrong ideal" When asked about the outburst, the soldier said that he had dreamed he was pursued by "doctors in white coats." He added that they were the same "white doctors" to whom he had confessed his encounter with a white French prostitute. His nightmare was indicative of a deep anxiety that eventually forced his hospitalization. No doubt, individual

factors played their part in this man's illness, but, in addition, the cultural factor with its rigid and impassable gulf between Negro and white also took its toll. Indeed, existence itself has taken on the character of anxiety for this person. Who can say whether therapy, or adjustment, or anything short of the saving grace of God will heal this wound?

The prevalence of anxiety and its deeply rooted character suggest that the problem will not be solved *in toto* by any action designed simply to adjust or even to re-educate man. Anxiety is intimately associated with the condition of man's existence. Man must live with it, and through it, in faith. Social action and techniques of therapy will relieve specific situations and reduce his vulnerability to it, but anxiety remains a problem as long as man remains man, and not a tree. Let Job make his witness:

For the thing that I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me (Job 3:25).

## *Chapter Two .*

# IN THE WORLD . . . ANXIETY

In the world you have tribulation . . .

—John 16:33

These words of Christ from the Fourth Gospel suggest the indigenous character of anxiety in existence. For at the very heart of life is the necessity of accepting its conditions. Many of us would defer that decision until we could be sure of our answer. Meanwhile we drift through the night of this life like a watchman making his rounds, that journey paced with a clock and the whole meaning too often consisting of having "punched in" at certain stations! But that aimlessness is as much an expression of our rejection of life as would be our shouting with Job:

I loathe my life . . .

Let me alone, for my days are a breath (Job 7:16).

The decision which life forces upon us—whether at heart to accept or to reject its conditions—always involves anxiety. What is more, it is a decision that can never be regarded as settled. Whether we affirm life or choose death in the midst of living, the matter is not finally decided since the alternative continues to confront us. One never rids himself of that dilemma or its attendant anxiety. But the words of Christ suggest a way of living with this permanent crisis in unfailing confidence.

### **CREATIVE ANXIETY**

It is a mistake to talk of getting rid of anxiety. It may be reduced by psychotherapy, and it is partially resolved

in Christian faith and community. There is no necessary antagonism between the two ways of healing. One is an instrument for emotional re-education; the other is a way of life in contact with the Source of all healing. Conflict between religion and psychiatry may be found in the inferences drawn from human experience, but it need not occur in the area of therapy and pastoral care. The concern with *how* and *what* in psychiatry does not always produce a unified answer as to *why*. This the conflicting philosophies of psychiatry obviously preclude.

Yet even when these inferences seem hostile to religion, we cannot overlook the wealth of insight concerning man's health that this discipline furnishes us. Thus we may disagree sharply with a commonly held opinion in psychiatry, such as the assumption that anxiety is eradicable, without drawing the conclusion that those who hold this view have nothing to offer man in the task of living through anxiety. On the other hand, some psychiatrists regard anxiety as always "restrictive," an interference with life. Yet it does not follow that the task of developing a free and spontaneous self is without anxiety.

The ordinary and universal experience of anxiety suggests that it is unavoidable in life—even necessary. Indeed, our great concern in dealing with the pathology of anxiety seems to have blinded us to its positive role. And psychiatry seems to have ignored that side of the experience largely because of its analytic concern with neurotic problems. This situation may be regarded as temporary, for the insights of psychoanalysis are being rapidly assimilated in other fields. For instance, concern with moral value may be a source of genuine and creative anxiety for man. Some psychiatrists, like Fromm and Horney, have gone beyond the traditional avoidance of this area in psychoanalysis. They have observed that a lack of moral concern adds to the "scatteredness" and "blindness" of modern life.

Anxiety is a part of man's living and deciding. No

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great work of imaginative art has ever come into being without it. As a creative force, it has sparked the souls of saints and poets throughout the ages and is associated with the most profound expressions of the human spirit. But when we speak of creative anxiety, we have in mind something quite different from the pathological anxiety that robs life of its zest and either immobilizes or seriously cripples the functioning of those who experience it. We have in mind an experience like St. Paul's conversion, the "psychotic episode" as some would have it, that broke the bonds of his own exclusiveness and made him brother to "Jew and Greek, bond and free." John Donne struggled to express an experience closely akin to creative anxiety when he wrote of holding back his tears that he

Might in this holy discontent,  
Mourn with some fruit . . . ,

a fruit which grows out of the knowledge that

In mine idolatry what showers of  
rain mine eyes did waste?

### SOME DISTINCTIONS

But together with its creative role as a spur to man's spirit, anxiety plays the negative role of restricting and reducing man's self-realization. The very devices that psychiatry has developed to uncover neurotic anxiety, such as the analysis of the unconscious areas of personality and the critical examination of the subtle influences of life conditions, are also effective ways of viewing the less dramatic, but inevitable, role that anxiety plays in all existence. Almost half a century before Freud, Søren Kierkegaard became concerned with and exposed the unconscious role of "anxious dread" even in the hidden recesses of man's happiness. With consummate skill he laid bare the "infinitely comic" devices that man utilizes to hide his real despair.

This very hidden quality of anxiety explains its per-

vasiveness and constitutes a hazard in making a distinction between the anxiety common to all human living and that which bears neurotic significance. The individual who carries "anxious dread" as the "gnawing secret" of his life is unlikely to seek the help of a psychiatrist. What is more, he will not come to grips with the ultimate meaning of his life. Although his sickness is shrouded and deeply buried within him, he does not escape the consequences of anxiety in his living. That ultimate anxiety takes its toll, as surely as any neurotic impoverishment.

For purposes of this discussion we should now characterize the three functional types of anxiety.

*Primary anxiety*, or the *anxiety of existence*, is that condition of shock that man always experiences on learning, as Pascal put it, "that he is something and that he is not everything." This anxiety accompanies freedom and, in actuality, is transformed into one of the other manifestations.

*Sinful anxiety* is the condition that persists when, under the threat of primal anxiety, man succumbs to the temptation to separate himself from God and experiences, as a result, both loss of freedom and innocence, and guilt under the judgment of God. Operatively, in the unconscious, it attempts to intensify its control and to hide its real object.

*Neurotic anxiety* is that condition that always bears a reference to a distortion in some basic interpersonal relation. It functions operatively outside consciousness through feelings of guilt and hostility, and it attempts by manipulative control to continue the original distortion.

It is obvious that these distinctions between primary, sinful, and neurotic anxiety are possible only in a theoretical discussion. In actual life they are combined, and it would be a rash man who would attempt to separate the various strains. Obviously, some behavior problems are readily explained as having a basis in neurotic anxiety. Yet since every

man experiences primary anxiety, and every man sins, neurotic anxiety is more or less intensified by sinful anxiety. This does not mean that it is impossible to deal with the pathology of neurotic anxiety. But it does mean that in practice no absolute and final distinction can be made between sinful and neurotic anxiety. Hence the patient who constantly complains, "I can never be what they want me to be!", is more than likely suffering from the impossible claims laid upon him by others whose relationship to him has left this residual distortion. Nevertheless, that plea can become an effective screen, behind which the individual hides his own responsibility for what he does with his life. Hence, in this age of psychological sophistication, one learns quite early to substitute "conditioning" for personal accountability. There is profound insight in the cartoon which pictured a small boy saying airily to his father, who is reading an obviously unsatisfactory report card, "Well, Pop, what is it this time, heredity or environment?"

#### **ANXIETY AND EXISTENCE**

What does it mean when we say that anxiety is unavoidably involved in man's existence? Hedged in by physical limitations, illness, and eventual death, man is deeply impressed with the caprice and uncertainty of life. The fact that he is not satisfied with mere animal existence and yet is constantly reminded that his rational capacities are limited, means that man is uneasy in the deepest core of his being. The very awareness of self brings man to the realization of his powerlessness and of the uncertainty of his existence. For to know self-identity is to be acutely conscious of its limitations in that it is always threatened with the possibility of loss and requires painful decisions to maintain itself. Furthermore, it must constantly adjust to the Other. At every point decision and action meet judgment. And from that there is no escape, either in hell or in heaven!

Man's position is unique. His ambiguous nature is the source of both his creativity and his sin. It means that he is able to transcend himself in thought and to experience loving communion with his fellows, but it also means that he knows the bitterness of frustration and despair. Being a child of nature and spirit, he cannot reach integration simply by becoming either pure animal or pure angel. He must live. Even though tempted to deny his spiritual life or to get rid of his natural body, his satisfactions require both; and he is driven to seek unity not only within himself, but also with his fellows, and ultimately with the ground of existence.

His creative effort, however, is always fraught with danger and anxiety. Rejection and disappointment stand ready to frustrate him; and all too frequently, in fear lest they overcome him, he gives up the effort to achieve self-hood and "adjusts" in order to appease the unbearable anxiety that he feels. But psychiatry knows a great deal about such "adjustments" where anxiety is not resolved, but continues to influence man's life outside consciousness. The monotonous sameness, from door-stops to gin labels, that marks the successful man in middle class suburbia is but a thin disguise for the raging despair that has swallowed up selfhood in conformity. As Kierkegaard put it with telling accuracy throughout *The Sickness Unto Death*, worldliness is made up of successful men who are not themselves!

The fullest realization of selfhood is made impossible by anxiety. Yet man never forgets completely the desire for wholeness that self-realization involves. Otto Rank holds that man retains in memory, as a symbol of wholeness, the embryonic state in the mother's womb, where the individual felt himself to be an indivisible whole and, at the same time, to be inseparably related to a greater whole, the mother.<sup>1</sup> Outside the womb the individual strives for whole-

<sup>1</sup> Otto Rank, *Will Therapy and Truth and Reality* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), pp. 185 ff.

ness of personality as a substitute for the totality lost at birth; but now his drive to realize wholeness is beset with a "primal fear," which may appear as a fear of life or as a fear of death. Kierkegaard relentlessly traces this primal fear back to man's inescapable relation to God. He insists that despair is an unwillingness to be oneself as grounded in God. Thus man's despair or anxiety arises out of his ultimate relation to God. But by busying himself with an "outward direction" and "forgetting" the ultimate relation of the self and the Eternal, man avoids coming to grips with the one relation that can resolve his despair, namely, to will in faith to be himself in the eyes of God.

The anxiety peculiar to man's creaturehood dwells in the hidden recesses of his being. Its searching questions are seldom confronted directly, although they contribute to his feeling of disquietude and restless drivenness in life. In our culture the anxious dread that accompanies direct discussion of death or suffering precludes our finding a satisfactory answer. It is a curious irony of civilization that our ability to "grieve creatively" is frustrated by our desire to avoid the fullest acceptance of the facts.<sup>2</sup> Death becomes, in our conversation, "passing on," and suffering is always mentioned in hushed tones.

Fromm has suggested that one source of the flatness of life in general is the suppression of our acknowledgment of tragedy and the fear of death, which live an illegitimate existence among us. And he attributes it to Christianity, which "has made death unreal and tried to comfort the unhappy individual by promises of life after death."<sup>3</sup> This may be true to the extent that the individual Christian participates in the cultural tendency to deny death and to ignore tragedy. But surely the Christian Gospel is founded upon the realistic acceptance of death; and the emphasis of

<sup>2</sup> Erich Lindemann, "Symptomology and Management of Acute Grief," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, CI (1944), 141-48. The phrase "grieve creatively" is Dr. Lindemann's.

<sup>3</sup> Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, p. 245.

its hope is not so much a promise of life after death as of an eternal life that begins *now*, in that entering into the faith community where death "hath no more dominion." Indeed, one might charge the psychiatrist with furthering the very condition he deplores, for it would be naive to assume that the individual alone could face the finality of death without a profound experience of dread and without the temptation to soften its bitterness with sentimentality. Whether a man is to be carried by a "band of angels" or by ancient Cheop's heavenly vessel, he wants to have a passport ready for that journey. Every man knows the meaning of Agog's words as he stood trembling before Samuel: "Surely death is bitter" (I Sam. 15:32 Goodspeed). The bitter taste of death requires healing waters which spring into eternal life. The Christian Gospel does not flee from the reality of death. Rather because of the conviction that resurrection is the means whereby God calls His people, one by one, into the deeper realities of eternal life, the fact of death is faced, and the unfinished business of living is handed over in trust to the ongoing community of inseparable love.

We must remember that the Church lives in a culture that refuses to acknowledge tragedy and cautions man "never to grow old, never to die." Members of the Church are not unaffected by this cultural view. The Church, however, in its corporate life is one of force which presses for a more realistic acceptance of death, even though its people, for reasons not wholly within the power of the Church to alter, choose to ignore its message. The Eucharist, which is offered daily in countless churches, is a perpetual renewal of Christ's "precious death and sacrifice until His coming again"; and the burial service of the Church directs that her sons and daughters be committed to the ground with the words, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust." Christian burial is a "committal"—an acceptance of death—in the faith that whether we live or die we belong to one another in God both in life and in death. By a culture

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that appears to have lost its capacity for faith, this Christian attitude should be counted a mark of health rather than a source of illness.

There is certainly reason to believe that an adequate expression of the depth and tragic fullness of life is missing in our culture. The poets and playwrights are constantly voicing the displacement and loneliness of modern man; but the fact that their expression consists largely in sharing our sense of lost meaning and of man's exile is some indication of our lack of cultural unity. Even the words we use for communication frequently seem to reveal our distance from one another. T. S. Eliot has reminded us of our "imprecisions":

. . . words strain,  
crack and sometimes break, under the burden,  
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,  
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,  
Will not, stay still . . .<sup>4</sup>

One of the words that does not stand still is *sin*. The present generation is familiar with a kind of "emancipated religion" that almost succeeded in cutting the heart out of Christianity by ignoring man's tragic inner destructiveness. It abhorred the word *sin*, made futile efforts to explain away man's moral recalcitrancy, and prescribed "moral imperatives" with wearying repetition. In its effort to adjust faith to modern man, "enlightened" religion mistook sins for sin and shifted the emphasis from man's *being* in faith to man's *doing* in action. To be sure, Christian being and action belong together, but when religion becomes primarily morals, the tragic corruption that springs from the heart of man is either deliberately ignored or banished to the unconscious. It remains, however, to infect man's best efforts. Most of

<sup>4</sup>T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1943), p. 7. Used by permission of the publisher.

us know this, in our innermost being, as the whispered truth. Thus when Job had completed the catalogue of his virtues to thrust in the face of God, he was still unsure of himself. Perhaps, he ponders, God does know the secrets of all hearts:

Oh, that I had the indictment written by my adversary (Job 31.35).

But Job never gets a list of particulars. He must live with the knowledge that all his works can neither purchase heaven nor prove his righteousness. This, too, is a part of man's tragic existence. When his heart is imprisoned in the things he can do and when he forgets that these efforts are partial, his living, as well as his dying, becomes a journey of frustration, fraught with despair. In every pilgrimage there is anxiety. It is the companion of all our years. But that sojourner in our souls becomes a tyrant when man separates himself from God, who is the other abiding companion.

Thus the picture of man's life emerges. Existence involves freedom, and freedom is both possibility and threat. The threat of freedom drives man into separation. He becomes unsure, ambivalent, and divided within himself. He becomes an island unto himself. He stands over against God, who is the source of his freedom and existence. But freedom is also a possibility that suffers from torn and broken relations in the actual business of living. The rejected child soon learns to use his freedom either to "submit" or to "protest." In either case he loses. Here again, it can be seen that, beyond this functional difference, no simple distinction between neurotic and sinful anxiety is possible. The actions of the rejected child may be the result both of his anxiety in rejection and of his anxiety to be in the center of the universe. Here is present in him the temptation to "play God." Anxiety then is a sickness that dwells in the heart. It

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is not surprising that it should become attached to so many particular objects. Auden suggests the inexorable logic of this illness and man's ultimate predicament because of it:

. . . All that exists  
Matters to man; he minds what happens  
And feels he is at fault, a fallen soul  
With power to place, to explain every  
What in his world but why he is neither  
God nor good, this guilt the insoluble  
  
Final fact, infusing his private  
Nexus of needs, his noted aims with  
Incomprehensible comprehensive dread  
At not being what he knows that before  
This world was he was willed to become.<sup>5</sup>

### THE ANXIETY BEHIND GUILT AND "GUILT FEELINGS"

Man's anxiety is ultimately that which reveals his unique relation to God. The experience of anxiety marks man as man. For who among the animals goes through life with the feeling of having been expelled from paradise, of having been alienated from that which makes one whole? The very act of existence itself involves man in this alienation. The moment when he realizes his possibility of being and of not being and proceeds to make real his potentiality for selfhood, the anxiety of possibility is translated into the tragic anxiety and guilt of existence. The word *realize* is used here in a symbolic sense. Part of the self may *know* about the anxiety of existence, but that part lies deeply hidden. Thus with endless wit man frets over the things that occasion his anxiety, putting off forever, if possible, his acknowledgment of the fact that he is really in despair over himself and *about* the Eternal. These *things* that occa-

<sup>5</sup> Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*, p. 24. Used by permission of the publisher.

sion his anxiety obscure that which the anxiety is ultimately *about*, namely, the Eternal One, who alone is able to overcome anxiety.<sup>6</sup> One patient, after several years of therapy, came to the conviction that her ultimate anxiety, in which the problems of meaninglessness, death, and guilt were raised, had been displaced by many other life situations which she knew she "could solve, if somehow pressed," but which always seemed to be the bearers of this deeper, illusive anxiety. Thus despair may lie at the roots of man's contradictory existence and wear the mask of pride and hostility simultaneously with that of self-hatred and rejection. Such a person may drink to excess in a vain effort to quiet his anxiety and, by this same action, convince himself of his own "worthlessness." Hence man's deepest needs, under the compulsion of anxiety, may become identified with guilt. And, paradoxically, that guilt will deny those very needs.

The psychiatrist is concerned with guilt feelings more in terms of the function that self-recriminating attitudes serve than in terms of the subject of guilt. Thus Karen Horney holds "that much of what looks like feelings of guilt is the expression either of anxiety or of a defense against it."<sup>7</sup> Freud's classic "Mourning and Melancholia," described the continuance of morbid grief as a displaced guilt feeling motivated by a repressed hostility that in some way was absolved by the individual in grief activity. But if the psychiatrist overlooks the area of real guilt in man's life, he is simply closing his eyes to an important phenomenon in human experience. An "understanding" may relieve a Lady Macbeth of her compulsive hand washing and help her to go on, but her real guilt remains. No amount of "understanding" will resolve this final guilt because its ultimate ground is pride and self-idolatry. There is reason to believe

<sup>6</sup> See Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1946), pp. 97 ff. for a full discussion of this distinction.

<sup>7</sup> Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, p. 235.

that Shakespeare was voicing the Christian view that ultimate healing is the work of the Divine Physician. The doctor, called to attend Lady Macbeth, states:

Foul whisperings are abroad: unnatural deeds  
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds  
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.  
More needs she the divine than the physician.  
God, God forgive us all! (*Macbeth*, V, 1).

Anxiety, though painful, reminds man of his freedom; in a sense we may say that anxiety is the price of freedom. In exercising his freedom, however, man becomes guilty. Man is always tempted by freedom to build a tower of pride over against that which gave him existence. This is man's irresistible temptation "to play God." Guilt follows and, in its wake, hostility and despair. It is interesting to note that in her last book, *Neurosis and Human Growth*, Karen Horney sees the problems of modern man in terms of the Faustian "search for glory" with unhealthy pride as its base.<sup>8</sup> The persistent stories of man's pact with the devil make this a recurrent theme in history. Anxiety accompanies freedom; freedom, in an effort to secure itself, tends toward pride; and pride results in guilt and despair. The author of Deuteronomy pictures the people as "scattered" to the ends of the earth, serving strange gods, but finding neither ease nor rest. Why? Because they did not serve the Lord God "with joyfulness and gladness of heart." Here is a description of the inexorable progress from idolatry to despair, where the glad heart of man becomes a hopeless sigh. Because of his idolatry man is given

. . . a trembling heart, and failing eyes, and  
a languishing soul;  
your life shall hang in doubt before you;  
night and day you shall be in dread,

<sup>8</sup> Karen Horney, *Neurosis and Human Growth* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1950).

and have no assurance of your life.

In the morning you shall say, "Would it were evening!" and at evening you shall say, "Would it were morning!" because of the dread which your heart shall fear, and the sights which your eyes shall see (Deuteronomy 28:65-67).

Now then, guilt is as real as man's pride, and both are nurtured in the inescapable anxiety of existence. Clearly more is involved in the question of guilt than can be explained by regarding it merely as the subjectively felt claims of the culture. No doubt, these forces do exert their influence in guilt feelings. It is important for our understanding of guilt to be aware of the subtle and persistent nature of social pressures. For instance, it should be noted that the identity of the authority behind these claims is vague and indiscriminate: "They think I am a snob." "People will say I'm no good." "All I ever did was to pass my driver's exam." Who makes the claims here? Who expresses the judgment which produces guilt feelings? It is the anonymous voice of others that speaks here. These claims bear no sanction from God, although they may be felt as "religious" imperatives. For, in truth, they are attributable to perfectionism, fastidiousness, or success mindedness. Guilt feelings are the result of destructive claims that probably have become operative in the individual because persons important to him have pressed them upon him. It is a part of health to see that these claims that have been pressed upon us are false claims, alien to our native health. But it is also important to look beyond these claims to the pride and self-idolatry that involve us in unresolved guilt. Indeed we may say that anxiety forces man to choose a way of life. As the inescapable crisis of existence, it offers only the alternatives: in faith and trust to commit oneself to the Creator, or in frantic anxiety to banish God in favor of the self. Thus idolatry is always the temptation of anxiety. When rein-

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forced by neurotic anxiety, it issues in a tragic way of life that is familiar to all of us; and feelings of guilt are the terrible burden of that way.

Man's guilt feelings, therefore, are derived from a number of sources. In actual living, they operate together to render him more or less helpless before the real object of his guilt. Both priest and physician may treat him for a long period before this guilt is exorcized. It is hard to see how any view of life, short of faith, can deal ultimately with the problems of unavoidable anxiety and of real guilt. For these can only be understood and dealt with in religious terms. Self-knowledge gained through psychotherapy may help in relieving neurotic guilt feelings, but the task is unfinished if it fails to find and resolve the deeper source of anxiety. Perhaps it may be said of that demon, as Jesus said of a generation of anxiety-laden people,

Nothing can make this kind come out, but prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29, Moffatt).

### THE TASK OF HEALING

The distinction between real guilt and guilt feelings raises the question of how one becomes aware of their difference. How is the task of healing accomplished? The Bible affirms that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." In placing emphasis on inner attitudes the long history of biblical religion has anticipated modern psychotherapy. St. Augustine put self-searching and self-awareness at the heart of man's effort to know both himself and God. His constant prayer was:

O God, who art ever the same, let me know myself,  
let me know thee.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> St. Augustine, *Soliloquies*, I. II, 1, in *An Augustine Synthesis*, ed. Erich Przywara (London: Sheed and Ward, 1932). Used by permission of the publisher.

This emphasis on self-searching, which has been available for centuries in prayer, worship, and spiritual discipline, has become in modern psychiatric practice a means of explicit help for emotional ills. Thus the patient who is the victim of guilt feelings may discover, with the help of a therapist, the reasons why he is susceptible to distorted claims. The therapist helps the patient to see and help himself. The same patient may also go to church where, through confession and repentance, he will see himself in the eyes of God. Something akin to psychotherapy has been a necessary part of Christian penance and absolution through the centuries. There can be no doubt that, as a tool, it has been shaped with great effectiveness by modern psychiatry. It has made possible eyes that see and ears that hear. It is not, however, a substitute for that seeing and hearing in which man's soul is kept alive.

Alone and separated, even in a crowd, man never discovers himself. His distortions and his guilt, real or imagined, remain undetected. Thus his deepest need is a spiritual one, the overcoming of his loneliness and separation, and this he can accomplish only in association with another human being. Man's health is lost, but it is also regained through the medium of interpersonal relations. Every human association carries the possibility of aiding or of damaging man's health. This means that those who deal with people in their work are agents of therapy, whether they are aware of the fact or not. In medical case histories reference is frequently made to the saving and beneficial effects of one good relationship, be it with nurse, teacher, or minister; but when this one relationship is absent, a report of complete failure and of withdrawal from the arena of life concludes the history.

Granted that the healing of anxiety takes place within interpersonal relations, it should be added that healing also requires a spirit of genuine concern on the part of the

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assisting agent. And this happens when love is the measure of man's desire to help, just as skill is the measure of his ability to help. The original meaning of the verb *to heal* was *to make whole*. He who is healed is made whole again. This, then, is the task of therapy. The very word is derived from the Greek verb *therapeuo*, which means *to attend* or *to care for*. Thus therapy, or the practice of healing, is accomplished within the climate of loving care and genuine concern. Its goal is more than the removal of symptoms. It looks to the renewal of man in his depths. Every step in that direction opens up new possibilities for self-fulfillment as it knocks down the walls of loneliness. The spirit of whole-heartedness, which is the aim and goal of therapy, finds expression in St. Paul's moving hymn to love:

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (I Cor. 13:7).

While it is true that everyone who helps another person to meet a crisis or to solve a problem is involved in therapy, this must not be confused with the work of carefully trained therapists. For the painstaking endeavors of these professional helpers (medical, psychological, and pastoral) is a carefully planned effort to apply knowledge and experience in therapy for the relief of anxiety. This work requires competence and training. It is significant that pastoral counseling, as a refinement of pastoral care, is now receiving some prominence in theological training programs. Here the pastor acquires through study and clinical training something of the "methodical thoroughness" of the trained helper.

Since Freud's day the basic technique in therapy for uncovering the real problems of the subject has been "permissive" talking or "free association," a method which relies on the rule of honesty and on the effort of the subject to report all that comes into his conscious mind. Out of this "free association" come the dreams, fantasies, marginal

thoughts, bodily tensions, and the many other inner pre-occupations that make up the subject matter of discussion; and these are always discussed in relation to the personality of the one seeking help. In psychotherapy much time may be spent in "reliving" and re-evaluating emotionally charged experiences. It may be necessary to "play back" one's life, or to "abreact" as the psychiatrist would say. From clues thus obtained, a more realistic adjustment can be devised for meeting life. The fact that anxiety is largely unconscious and that it is brought into awareness with great pain means that the effort to live beyond it is a prolonged and tedious one. It requires both honesty and uncommon courage.

The aim of therapy is the rediscovery of the self that has been obscured by anxiety. Neither re-education nor rational understanding seem quite as important in achieving this goal as the establishment of a genuine relationship with the therapist. In individual terms the patient strives within this human association to rediscover his at-oneness with others, while at the same time his guilt feelings and self-contempt are progressively undermined. To be sure, a rational understanding of the difficulties in living and of their relation to character structure is important, but the patient can make confident use of these facts only as he gains the conviction that he is accepted. To be of help to one incapacitated by anxiety, the therapist must, of necessity, have a healthy regard for the processes of growth and for human striving for community. When the therapy is concluded, the subject has become a human being who enjoys both freedom and relatedness to others, whose goals are freely chosen, and whose problems in living are more adequately handled by his own native resources.

The end of therapy should be a natural outgrowth of the helping relationship itself, since therapy is aimed at progress toward inner strength in the one helped. Certainly an immediate goal of great importance is the capacity to see other people as they really are. On another level, therapy

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is successful to the extent that it draws the individual back into satisfying group living. The goal of therapy always implies that one gains anew the courage to be himself. That courage comes only through faith. For the Christian it comes as a response to God, "who was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Would it be too much to say that psychotherapy could be a preparation for Christ? It frequently produces a readiness for faith and an expectancy that is fulfilled only in the Church.

### **ANXIETY AND FAITH**

The goal of health looks not for the removal of anxiety, but for its absorption in a positively oriented faith that is outgoing and related to the ground of existence, as well as deeply rooted in present reality. This end is being furthered in our generation by psychoanalysis; but, by their own admission, many psychiatrists are limited in what they can accomplish. Their work, which is largely with the negative areas of personality, leaves many functions of the creative orientation to other forces in man's life. Individual therapy is not possible for large numbers of people; and, unfortunately, most of those who have suffered severely from the pathology of our society can hardly afford adequate medical care, and certainly they cannot afford the professional services of a psychoanalyst.

The answer to this difficulty is two-fold. Society must be sensitized to its growing casualty list of those who are the victims of its malfunctioning: those suffering from economic and personal insecurity, those victimized by its institutionalized prejudice and racial discrimination, and those whose personalities are twisted even before they emerge from youth by the modern obsession for power with its propensity for war. This is a task for government and for education, for church and for home. Its urgency can hardly be overestimated. It is a race between man's ability to adapt himself for his own welfare, and the gathering com-

plexity and self-destructive momentum of mass living. It is a task for all of us.

Second, we must rediscover and strengthen, what Otto Rank called, the "spontaneous therapies" of mankind in religion, philosophy, and art. It is here that most men fight the battle with anxiety in a deeply personal and intimate way. The remaining chapters in this book will be an exploration of the resources in the Christian faith for meeting and dealing with anxiety.

In turning to the language of faith, we should keep in mind that the religious answer is a spontaneous therapy that uses words, relations, and certain symbolic acts as the bearers of meaning, rather than as the deliberate tools of therapy. In this we recall the formulation of William James, that "feeling is the deeper source of religion, and that philosophic and theological formulas are secondary products like translations of a text into another tongue."<sup>10</sup>

"Thy faith hath made thee whole!" This is the perspective of religion: that faith and wholeness are found together. The conviction of modern psychosomatic medicine is that health, in contrast to illness, is found in those who are in communication with the wider areas of the self. This already points in the direction of the religious view that man's wholeness consists in being in touch lovingly with God and with his neighbor.

Therapy must include something more than the analysis of the negative aspects of personality. Some view of wholeness, such as that which finds expression in the interpersonal relation with the therapist and gradually in the wider associations of the individual, is the unfailing component of health. Creativity, love, courage, and faith are qualities that cannot exist as separate entities. They are found together in the whole man whose total orientation is ex-

<sup>10</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: The Modern Library), p. 422. Used by permission of Paul R. Reynolds & Son, 599 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

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pressed by these very qualities. Religious faith may serve as such an orientation. H. Flanders Dunbar, who has done much to open up the field of psychosomatic medicine, pointed out some twenty years ago that religious symbols and techniques are directed primarily toward wholes and, as such, have a distinct role in fostering health.

We may say that religion is involved in two rather fundamental needs of man, both of which are suggested by the term *religio*, if we may interpret the word to mean binding back, being whole again, overcoming shatteredness and disorder. In the first instance religion deals with man's need to realize himself. It is concerned with man's "will to be his own self," to enjoy the fullness of his being. And the degree of selfhood attained is the measure of his freedom and self-respect, and of his ability to act without coercion from without or within. In short, religion is concerned with man's unity. It is assumed, however, that in finding himself man discovers his relation to others and his ultimate relation to God, the ground and source of every relation. This latter discovery is the answer to that other fundamental need of man—namely, to relate himself in wholeness to the deepest source of his being. Freud was forced to deal with this need in what was called an "oceanic feeling." Although he had not experienced this feeling himself and attributed its presence in others to wish fantasies, Freud was forced to admit that many people had described an inner longing for that completely unifying experience which they found expressed only in religious symbols.

The Christian answer to man's anxiety is ultimately cast in terms of faith and loving communion. It is through meeting on this deepest level that, in the New Testament, the sick are healed, the mourners comforted, and the poor inspired with zeal. By such faith the man Saul discovers a new being, and in that communion he is never separated from the love of God. Genuine faith involves more than the acceptance and recital of certain creeds. Man's loyalty and

faith spring from his unreserved participation in that faith community to which in life, as in death, his being is committed as into the hands of God. The reality of that relationship of trust is his source of courage and strength to accept with honesty his own predicament, and yet to live by faith. Job's agonized cry is some measure of the strength of that ultimate trust:

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him (Job 13:15, AV).

The language of faith is symbol and myth. It is indeed difficult for this age, which, despite recent efforts to overcome the gap between mind and body, is still under the influence of Cartesian dualism, to appreciate the very real connection between symbol and reality. On the negative side Freud has accomplished much simply by insisting that obsessive and compulsive acts have meaning. But his prejudice against religion apparently kept him from developing the positive side of his insight—namely, that religious symbols have a creative meaning and function in the total personality. Neurotic symbols, as Rank and others have observed, tend in the direction of ineffectual gestures away from reality; creative symbols, however, are meaningful actions that enhance reality. Religious symbols, whether they be biblical stories or liturgical acts, strive to fulfill the function of creative symbols. They are bearers of a meaning and a truth that can only be expressed through living portraiture and dramatic action. The great stories of the Bible portray God's relation to man by way of analogy. To be sure, it is impossible to portray in any word or story the full meaning of God for man, but the Bible through its account of the mighty acts of God in history and the Church in her liturgy open the way for man to live into and to become part of the community of grace and trust that God has called into being.

Man's affirmation of the great truths of biblical religion—the creation and fall of man, his sin, redemption and salva-

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tion, and Christian life and sacraments—has always been made as an outcome of his wrestling with the realities of life. The threat of anxiety is a part of that reality that is the common concern of every man, as well as of the pastor and the professional helper. In the following chapters we shall attempt to explore the meaning and resolution of anxiety for Christian faith.

*Part II*

**ANXIETY AND THE CHRISTIAN  
VIEW OF MAN**



## WHAT IS MAN?

“For what are we, my brother?” asks the poet,  
“We are a phantom flare of grieved desire . . .  
A brevity of days haunted by the eternity  
of the earth . . .  
We are a twist of passion,  
A moment’s flame of love and ecstasy . . .  
An almost captured beauty . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Man is haunted not only by the “eternity of the earth,” but also by his lost life, which might have been. The sense of lostness and fugitive wandering that has existed since the days of Cain is heightened by modern man’s excruciating loneliness. The heroic figure who only yesterday expelled God from his world and loudly proclaimed his own emancipation looks in vain for a companion to share his empty victory. His search is fruitless, because in a world of proud individualism the community of sharing has disappeared. What is left? Only nameless crowds, without faces. Those that dwell in the midst of crowds know the depths of that loneliness! Those others that flee into solitude, or into fantasy, find, with Job, only unsettling disturbance, like the fretful sleep of fugitives. This is the reality of man’s life: loneliness and exile.

From this perspective much of modern thought may be regarded as an effort to explain the reason for man’s

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Wolfe, *A Stone, a Leaf, a Door* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1950), pp. 77-78. Used by permission of the publisher.

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discontent. We have searched every nook and corner of God's universe for an answer. We have located the trouble in our institutions, in our economy, even in our religion; but never in man himself. The permanent crisis, however, through which we are living is now tending to shift our attention once more to the crucial question, What is man? This is the inescapable self-knowledge to which we are coming under the hammer blows of modern life. The poets, the playwrights, and the novelists are reflecting our renewed concern with the mystery and paradox that is man. Somehow our common experience has taught us that it is not enough to say that man is shaped by his institutions, propelled by his economic concerns, and patterned by his emotional conditioning. All these things are true, but man is more than the total of these. What is man? He is a center of vitality—a striving, yearning, choosing, and rebelling creature whose final pain and joy is strangely related to that fugitiveness that he feels. For that pain is turned to joy, not through anything he can possess or even do, but through the knowledge arising from faith that his struggle has purpose, that God seeks and finds him in his exile.

### UNITY AND SOLIDARITY

Berdyaev has said that "solitude is a late product of advanced culture."<sup>2</sup> Primitive man lives primarily in and through his social group. Only the advanced societies can afford the radical individualism to which we are accustomed. The ravages of loneliness in our day raise the question that perhaps our zeal for individualism has cost us real living. Shared life is prior to solitude in more respects than is man's evolutionary development. Shared life is the necessary condition within which alone the individual man can develop. It is in his capacity to share—to see, hear, and respond to others—that man's uniqueness is realized.

<sup>2</sup> Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Beginning and the End* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), p. 216.

This capacity to communicate with others throws light on the use of the term *human nature* in the Christian Church. It should in no way imply a fixed entity that is the standard endowment of every human being. The social scientists have demonstrated emphatically that personality structures vary from one culture to another and that the notion of an invariable human nature cannot be supported. On the other hand, if we regard human nature not as a finished product, but as the raw material from which human character is built, the objections seem to be met. Modern psychiatry has taught us not only that the variety of personality manifestation is infinite, but also that, for all these ranges of variation, we are more alike than different. It is that *alikeness*, conceived not in terms of rigid personality inventory, but in terms of the unique consciousness of the human being that is indicated by the term *human nature*. And it is here that the ultimate foundation of human character and conduct is to be found.

Our awareness of the manifold variableness of human character makes it difficult for us to appreciate the way in which Christian theology speaks of man. It should be remembered, however, that the ancient world conceived of humanity in terms of *unity* and *solidarity*, a conception modern thought is only beginning to recover through the insights of psychosomatic medicine and the *wholeness* perspective. Both the Greeks and the Hebrews assumed that every man is represented in any one man and that a whole people could be symbolized in a single figure. But in the biblical view, the unity and solidarity of man is rooted in God as the Lord of all creation. Israel knew Him first as the "God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"—that is, through Israel's personal and concrete experience of that faith. Apart from this community of faith, the individual as such had no status. Through this community of faith, the Israelite not only lived but found completion, his "I" responding to the divine "Thou." This re-

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lation was the source of that continuing renewal recorded in biblical history:

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house;  
they will be alway praising thee.

Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee;  
in whose heart are Thy ways . . .

They will go from strength to strength . . . (Psalm 84:4-5 and 7a).

Berdyaev, who speaks from the ancient tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy, has expressed the view of man familiar to the world of antiquity, the view that is being recovered today:

Man is not a fragmentary part of the world but contains the whole riddle of the universe and the solution of it.<sup>8</sup>

For the Greek, and especially for the Stoic, that “riddle” was associated with the Word, *logos*, the divine light of the “hidden harmony” that shines through every man. Later the Hebraic Christians were to woo their Gentile neighbors with the proclamation that the *logos* had become flesh, and that through the death and resurrection of Christ the way had been opened for all men to be restored to unity with God. It was this sense of unity and solidarity, held by the ancients, that prepared the way for the acceptance of the Christian view of man, his fall in Adam and his redemption in Christ.

### IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

In the Bible man is God’s creature, made in His own image. Man is called by God into being, and his distinctive selfhood is fulfilled only through his freely acknowledged dependence upon God. This essential relationship—the *that*

<sup>8</sup> Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Destiny of Man* (New York: Chas. Scribner’s Sons, 1937), p. 59.

in man which refers back to God—remains, even in estrangement, as a reminder that *to live* is to know God, and to be apart from God *is to be in death*, even in the midst of life.

Lady Blackwell, in T. S. Eliot's play, *The Confidential Clerk*, speaks of the image of God in man when she declares,

. . . of course, there's something in us,  
In all of us, which isn't just heredity,  
But something unique. Something we have been  
From eternity. Something . . . straight from God.  
That means that we are nearer to God than to anyone.<sup>4</sup>

That "something straight from God" accounts for the restlessness in man, which never ceases until he returns to God. The image of God in man seeks responsive expression through his freedom and his selfhood. Indeed, the only full freedom and selfhood man ever knows comes when his life is shaped according to the image of God and lived in relation to God. This is the condition in which man can most truly be himself.

The significance of man's utter dependency upon God is further emphasized in these words from the Genesis account:

Then the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; And man became a living soul (Genesis 2:7, AV).

Man is a "*living soul*," dependent for continuing life upon the breath of God. Without that life-giving breath, he is but a handful of dust. We see here that the emphasis of Hebrew psychology is not upon a dualism of body and soul, but upon "*living soul*" and its opposite, nothingness. For the Hebrew the experience of Ezekiel was universal.

<sup>4</sup>T. S. Eliot, *The Confidential Clerk* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1954), p. 87. Used by permission of the publisher.

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Ezekiel had been ordered, you will recall, to stand upon his feet, but he found that he could not do so until “the spirit entered into” him and set him upon his feet (Ezekiel 2:1-2). In God’s relation to man, creation is continued when man responds to the spirit of God and when that spirit enters and strengthens him. Alone, man is helpless to become what God intended him to be; but neither does God’s plan call for man’s self-annihilation. He becomes himself most fully, that is, a *living soul* in touch with himself and others, only in a faith-trust relationship with God.

### THE IMAGE OF GOD AND ESSENTIAL MAN

“In the beginning God created . . .” Thus begins the biblical account of creation of which man’s creation is a part. In that account he shares in the goodness and in the harmony of creation. Some Christian views posit an “original righteousness” in an historical sense, but it is our understanding that the goodness and the harmony of creation are both present and lost in every man’s experience.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, we have already said that the image of God in man remains even when he is separated from God; it becomes, under this condition, a reminder of that prior harmony. In the story of Adam man’s created wholeness is symbolized before the fall in his innocence. He is pictured as participating unconsciously in that unity of creation, which is, according to one Psalmist, the spontaneous worship of all creation before the Creator:

All Thy works praise thee, O Lord,  
And thy saints give thanks unto thee (Psalm 145:10).

\*This view finds expression in Edward John Bickwell’s paper in *Essays Catholic and Critical*, ed. E. G. Selwyn (London: SPCK, 1950): “It is quite conceivable that there once was a time when the human race was developing on right lines, a period of what we might call, to use the old term, ‘original righteousness’” (p. 222).

The term *image of God* summarizes man's essential endowment at the time of his creation. One might say, indeed, that a full understanding of this term will convey some idea of what God intended for man in the beginning. It may also stand as a symbol of man's true relationship to God, and to himself when he is most truly himself. But how shall we describe essential man?

We have already identified an important aspect of man's being when we used the biblical designation "living soul." This descriptive phrase points up the significance of man's wholeness in creation. It belongs to, and is dependent upon, his relation to God. On the other hand, man's wholeness is shattered and lost when he ceases to have a living connection with God. It is in this sense that the biblical contrast is between faith which is life, and rebellion which is death, rather than between existence and non-existence. Indeed, the Genesis account would lead us to believe that death was not a part of God's original plan for man. It is a sign of the judgment under which man stands in sin. In the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul speaks of the two dominions: that of death bequeathed to us in Adam, and that of new life made possible in Christ. For us, wholeness or salvation constitutes the reality of the new life in Christ. To die means separation and fragmentation. But it should be remembered that the Hebrews had no word for wholeness. Man is either a living soul profoundly in touch with himself through God, or he is dead and set apart from God's vitalizing breath. It is significant that we have been forced in our day to reconstruct the concept of wholeness that is implied in the word *psychosomatic*, and yet the Bible understands and identifies this reality simply as *life*.

Man is a living soul, a part of God's creation—but with a difference. He is set at the head of creation to have "dominion" over it, and he is possessed of a finite freedom and selfhood that he must relate to God. In *The Pillar of*

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*Fire*, a moving account of a spiritual pilgrimage, Karl Stern notes that a certain rabbi insisted that an even more fundamental proposition than “Love thy neighbor,” is “He created man in His own image.” The violence and the degradation that many persecuted groups in modern history have suffered underlines that wisdom. Man is an upright creature who knows the sound of God’s voice, and he cannot be understood as a child of nature, or even as a brother to man, without first acknowledging his relation to God. The Bible pictures man as the only animal that enjoys this relatedness and similarity, that hears and responds to God’s voice. One of the psalmists is moved to ecstasy when he dwells on this aspect of man’s life:

Yet thou hast made him little less than God,  
And dost crown him with glory and honor.  
Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy  
hands (Psalm 8:5-6, RSV).

But this picture of man requires the balance of another psalmist:

I say, ‘you are gods,  
sons of the Most High, all of you;  
Nevertheless, you shall die like men,  
And fall like any prince’ (Psalm 82:6-7, RSV).

Man’s dominion is limited. There are boundaries he cannot pass. His expansiveness is met with the remainder that apart from God he is but the dust of the earth.

Man is made in the image of God, and the glory of that image tempts him to imagine the opposite, that God is the projection of man’s mind. This idolatry makes it possible for man to imagine that he controls God. In this connection it seems significant that the Hebrews had no word for *religion*. Their nearest equivalent is contained in the verse:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10).

For the Hebrew man's essential relation to God is one that keeps him ever mindful that the crucial fact of his existence is his dependence on God; his "liveliness" always refers back to God.

It follows from what has been said that in the biblical view man can be understood neither as an end in himself, nor in relation to nature, but only as a child of God. The humanist counsels man to be "for himself," but the autonomous self is cut off from that judgment and grace which makes newness possible. The experimental psychologist sees man's every movement reflected in the conditioned reflexes of mice and other laboratory animals. But the prophet Jeremiah observed long before, that there is one important difference between man and animal:

Even the stork in the heavens  
    knows her times;  
and the turtledove, swallow, and crane  
    keep the time of their coming;  
but my people know not  
    the ordinance of the Lord (Jeremiah 8:7).

Where the animals "know" and live by the appointed order of nature, man must discover and decide for himself. This act of decision implies both a freedom and distinctive self-hood, those painful realities of his existence that forever tempt him to give up his manhood and to seek release in an animal-like existence. But there is One who is acquainted with all man's ways, One who seeks without haste, without ceasing. The everlasting God lets man go his own way, but He does not let him go alone. He waits for man with a terrible patience. Beyond all fleeing, His voice is hope: "Come again, ye children of men." There comes a time when man "knows," in the words of the Shorter Catechism, that

his "chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

We have been considering the significance of the image of God in man. The vital relation to God that this term signifies is made explicit in the portrayal of the relation of man and woman. It hardly seems accidental (even though the creation of Eve comes as a divine afterthought) that man's life evolves from the beginning as a communal affair. We have it from the Creator Himself that "it is not good for man to be alone." Man is incomplete when he is alone. This truth is amply demonstrated in every study of human relations. Loneliness and isolation are accompanied by the loss of humanity. But what has *not* been demonstrated or emphasized enough, is the fact that every man, even the mythical self-made man, is dependent upon a supporting and responsive community for the barest realization of himself. At the heart of that community is the profound meeting of man and woman, where they become *one flesh* and, under God, begin to complete each other's incompleteness. The meeting and the response, signified by that expression *one flesh*, is another manifestation of man's peculiar endowment, namely, that he is made in the image of God. *Henosis* (*one flesh*) indicates a profound coming together and points in the direction of man's ultimate relation to God, where knowing and being known are comprehended only in the heights and depths of man's being and where faith speaks to the whole man.

#### MAN IN EXISTENCE

Man's endowment in creation finds expression in finite freedom. In essential man that freedom is the means whereby he responds wholeheartedly to God. Response requires freedom and selfhood, for the answering word must come from one who knows himself to be free and individual, though related to God by faith. This is the picture of man before his expulsion from Eden; this is everyman in dreaming innocence: He lives by the word of God. His life is a

spontaneous fulfillment of God's blessing in creation. In psychiatric terms, one might say that essential man is free to *actualize* his freedom. But the *actuality* of man's freedom, in the sense of actual history as we know it, is always accompanied by the loss of innocence. The harmony of creation that man remembers as the effortless capacity to serve God is destroyed from within at the very moment freedom becomes a matter of actual choice. In the instant he is driven to decision by the inevitable dilemma of freedom, man experiences first, anxiety, and then, sin and guilt. His anxiety is symbolized in the tempting words of the serpent that sought to reassure a wavering Eve that the consequence of grasping her own freedom would surely not be death, but the knowledge of good and evil! There is a curious wisdom in the serpent's words, for the disobedience before God that seems to be an inevitable part of man's exercise of freedom issues not in his annihilation, but in his knowledge of good and evil, particularly of his own guilt and shame. And this separation is, indeed, death.

As long as man escapes recognition of his own involvement in guilt, he may attribute his condition to the sin of others or to accident. How many marriage partners live on the assumption that fate has dealt them a cruel blow, in placing them with intolerable partners? While a spouse may be insufferable, he or she represents only part of the decision which created the marital union. The reality of freedom and the necessity of choice forces the inescapable question of personal involvement in every decision. When man is faced with the inevitable fact, not only of his own responsibility in freedom, but also of his own guilt in its exercise, the question *What is man?* becomes a vital concern. That question, applied in the most personal way, involves asking, "Who am I?" The answer is little short of devastating when candor prevails. G. K. Chesterton has remarked that, whatever this question means, it conveys the truth "that I am not myself." When man comes to the conviction that

he is not himself as created by God, he is ready to hear what Chesterton has called the “good news of original sin.” Indeed, that man is not himself—nor can he be apart from God—is good news to those that have felt the weight of hopelessness in man’s effort to save himself.

The dignity of man and his misery have the same root —his radical freedom. He is free to turn away from God. He is free to choose nothingness. But whether his choice be in faith or in separation from God, he must live through the anxiety involved in deciding. That anxiety represents the constant threat of freedom. It is a part of existence. It may be associated with loneliness, or with the fear of death and disease, or simply with the fear of decision. In any case this primal anxiety is “free floating” and lends an atmosphere of disquiet to life, even apart from the transformation of anxiety by sin. Kierkegaard, in equating dread with the possibility of freedom, calls it education for faith, because ultimately dread is answered only in faith. Dread or anxiety is the mark of actual existence, just as innocence and freedom are the signs of created goodness. Kierkegaard understood the profound significance of dread in much the same way in which depth psychology understands anxiety. He wrote: “Dread is a qualification of the dreaming spirit . . . it is different from fear and similar concepts which refer to something definite, whereas dread is the reality of freedom as possibility anterior to possibility. One does not therefore find dread in the beast, precisely for the reason that by nature the beast is not qualified by the spirit.”<sup>6</sup>

The threat of freedom that man experiences as anxiety becomes a temptation to sin. He may wish to give up his freedom or grasp it possessively, but in either case the consequences of his action involve guilt. He can avoid neither the anxiety of freedom nor the guilt involved in its use! Christ has given us a picture of the debilitating agony of

<sup>6</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Dread* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1946), p. 38. Used by permission of the publisher.

this necessity of choice in his parable of the talents. The third man received one talent. In a frenzy of anxiety he buried it in the ground thinking thus to protect his innocence against the day of his Lord's accounting. But he was excoriated for his pains, and all was taken from him. His attempt to escape the threat of freedom was no more successful than Eve's defiance in grasping it. Both experienced anxiety and both succumbed to sin. It is man's freedom that makes history possible, that makes the fulfillment of self-hood a desirable goal of living, and sin a fact of existence. The paradox of man's life is that in his anxiety to avoid guilt he becomes guilty. In terms familiar to psychiatry, anxiety creates the very condition it wishes to avoid. But this anxiety of existence cannot be avoided. Neither therapy nor education can hope to remove the necessity of facing up to this basic anxiety. It is a part of man's finitude, for this irreducible apprehensiveness is rooted in the fact that man belongs both to the finite world that changes and to the infinite world that remains. Moreover, this apprehensiveness can easily be transformed by sin and guilt into the compulsive and specific anxiety that stalks man's life. It is not man's finitude, nor his dependence as such, that tempts him to sin, but his anxiety about them. Anxiety is the soil that breeds sin, but it is not identical with sin. The possibility remains that faith can control the anxiety of finitude. That possibility must be considered against the reality of man's "untrustingness." Faith prepares man for trust, but anxiety keeps him suspended between holding back and yielding; so like the child in Robert Frost's poem who was caught in the sudden recoil of a tree branch, he falters helplessly between his fear and his pride:

I had not taken the first step in knowledge;  
I had not learned to let go with the hands,  
As still I have not learned to with the heart . . .<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Robert Frost, "Wild Grapes," *New Hampshire* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1923), p. 49. Used by permission of the publisher.

## FALLEN MAN

A recurring sentiment throughout the Book of Job takes the form, "I loathe my life . . ." These words strike a responsive chord in that they express a deeply felt resentment against life as it is, a resentment that appears to be universal. Even Porcupine, of comic-strip fame, hoped that his vacation would make a new man of him, because he didn't like the old man. Kierkegaard weaves a delightful parable around a single lily which came to bloom in a lovely valley.<sup>8</sup> That lily, beautiful as only nature fashions beauty, became dissatisfied with itself when a chattering bird claimed that the lilies in another meadow were even more beautiful. Finally, in desperation, the lily persuaded the bird to pluck it up by the roots and to transplant it into that more desirable place. Deprived of its life-giving soil, however, the lily died en route. Now such a story is foolish, the author concludes, when it concerns a lily, because lilies do not do such things. But men do! They are forever rejecting their lot, forever refusing to be themselves.

The refusal to accept himself as God has made him, and the life-long striving to make himself over in terms of his own prideful image is the characteristic of man. In this sense disobedience before God is man's original and continuing sin. He refuses to be himself as a child of God, and that disobedience is his downfall. The Bible has pictured the fall of man in the simple, but profound, story of Adam and Eve. Even before the act of eating the fruit, something was amiss in paradise. Eve savored the fruit before she tasted it, and Adam was near enough to smack his lips! Man's fall cannot be adequately pictured in an act of disobedience, for it is an inner rebellion before it becomes an actual fact. Ultimately, the Christian view is a paradox that recognizes that sin must in some way posit itself, for

<sup>8</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *The Gospel of Suffering and the Lilies of the Field* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1948), pp. 178 ff.

even in innocence the presence of anxiety suggests that man is already in sin. The fall of man means the loss of that harmony in which he was created and a contradictory existence in which anxiety is the driving force, an anxiety that alternates between pride and guilt, hostility and despair.

The story of Adam and Eve is the biblical way of accounting for man's fallen existence and his remembered innocence. As we have seen, this poetic way of picturing man's fall has a significance which goes beyond the act of Eve's eating the forbidden fruit. It is a picture of what happens to every person, again and again. Bishop Gore thus interprets this:

We are fallen by our iniquity. Thus Adam and Eve stand for every man and woman, and the story of their fall is the true story of humanity and of what has been its ruin in every individual case.

It is interesting that Freud, in his studies of human behavior, also produced a myth that helped him understand man's ambivalent actions. Freud postulated an original murder of the father of the clan by sons who coveted their father's wives. Consequently, every child experiences both a forbidden desire and a resultant guilt, which Freud has called the Oedipus complex.

Apart from its incestual setting, but seen with Freud's broad view of sex in mind, the fall of man, as pictured in psychoanalysis, appears to have much in common with the biblical picture. In both, man's ambivalent behavior is regarded as having its origin in an unwillingness to accept the givenness of one's self as a child (and not the parent or God) and in rebellious action that results in feelings of guilt. It would seem that Freud never connected his final theory of anxiety, wherein the anxiety arises from a deeply hidden "death instinct," with his postulation of the Oedipus complex. But they are consistent in that the logical end of radical

rebelliousness in both is self-destruction and a preference for death (even though it be slow death in living), rather than an acceptance of the givenness of life. The individual vows that he will be all or nothing; he becomes a Nietzschean "superman," defiant of the gods! From this side, guilt feelings become a restraining and protective screen against an uncompromising self-will whose possession of the parent is only one step along the road either to complete dominance or to death. Anxiety remains the whispered truth in the depths of man's soul that his assertion of himself is fraught with inescapable dangers. In the biblical view, as in the Freudian, that anxiety is easily transformed into a compulsive force that robs man of his freedom.

For the Christian, rejection of the self that is given means an unwillingness to accept the self in relation to God. Sin is disobedience before God, a turning away from the source of life. When this takes place, a man busily endeavors to "prove his own life by much work, by cleverness, or by a constant running away to forget. From the riches of her clinical experience, Frieda Fromm-Reichmann gives us this comment on one who felt essentially worthless:

A person who felt worthless and hated in his childhood may, more or less, purposely behave in an offensive way in later years, namely, insolently, in order to arouse hatred for his behavior. It is more bearable to feel hated for what one does than for what one is.<sup>9</sup>

It is this deeply felt anxiety about *what we are* that hurts most. It stands behind our feverish activities, undermines our satisfactions, and betrays an emptiness in much of our "doings." Those that seek help in counseling complain frequently that neither their work, nor their marriage, nor their hobby "makes any difference." The reality of their

<sup>9</sup> Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, *Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), p. 53.

lives remains a poor substitute for the dreams they cherish. Many who never seek help and never give up the illusion that life's emptiness will be redeemed by some windfall, look forward with mounting desperation to what tomorrow may bring. A character in a recent popular novel kept saying to herself bitterly, "There must be something more than this!"

That "something more" comes not as the product of what man does, but of what he is. What we are determines what we do. *Being* precedes *doing*, and modern man is frustrated in the effort to reverse this relationship. He learns too late that he cannot become a new person by following "five easy rules for living," or by changing his brand in life's trivia, or even by "trying hard." The anxious man has become convinced that the underwriting of his deepest happiness lies outside his God-given self in someone else, or in what he can do, or in what he can possess. The truth is, however, that none of these things can "make any difference" if at heart man has lost faith in himself as the beloved of God. The confidence of Christian man springs from that renewing love which accompanies the conviction that although of ourselves we remain unchanged, it is by the inexplicable gift of Christ that we become "new beings." In that confidence a man may find himself—his whole self as intended by God. (Without faith man never knows the meaning of wholeness. He genuinely becomes himself not by achieving certain goals, but by recovering through faith and trust that wholeness which is always his when he is in touch with God.)

In the developing program of Christian education in the Episcopal Church, it has been found helpful to meet with small groups of lay people over a weekend and to discuss with them the place of the parish in Christian nurture. Frequently, the discussions during such a conference are climaxed by a mock drama in which the type of problem

that a troubled Christian frequently encounters is made the theme. Out of one such recent discussion this hypothetical personality emerged:

Mr. I. W. Hooper, an inactive member of the parish, faces a crisis when he fails to receive on his job a promotion he desires. His failure to win this crucial advancement takes on the character of desperation, and he is now on the road to becoming an alcoholic. Last night a member of the parish met Mr. Hooper in town and found him in a helpless state of drunkenness. This friend took him home and promised to call on him the next day. The question facing the concerned Christian is how he may use his contact with Mr. Hooper in such a way as to convey Christian acceptance and grace. The caller knows that Mr. Hooper is in his middle years, married, and the father of two children who have recently married and established their own homes. Further, it is known that neither Mr. Hooper nor his wife attends church regularly, although she has been active in several church organizations. Discreet inquiries disclose that Mr. Hooper has tended to depend heavily on social and economic status for his self-esteem and that his wife has complained bitterly from time to time that "he lives for his work and for nothing else!"

Mr. Hooper presents a great challenge to the average churchman, because he so evidently seems "to need something to hold on to," or "to have a job where he can forget his problems," or "to be made to feel important again." While all these prescriptions may be relevant, if they are actually employed in Mr. Hooper's case, they come dangerously close to the manipulation of one person by another; and they are likely to leave that gentleman with the conviction that his ultimate relation to Christian life rests in the hands of these successful, though obviously less humble, churchmen.

At the heart of Mr. Hooper's problem is the fact that he cannot believe that God accepts him because God created

him. He has striven to win his own self-esteem by what he can do and by what he can possess. It is likely that this way of estimating his own worth dates from earliest childhood and that the unreasonable claims of other people have helped to magnify the problem. In other words, it must be admitted that there is some pathology here; but in view of the universal nature of the anxiety behind such behavior, it can hardly be considered unique. Mr. Hooper's deepest need is the recovery of his humanity, a recovery that can neither be purchased nor manufactured by his own efforts. It must come as a free gift. If this man is to be restored to himself, it will be through a new relation to those that are able to give to him of themselves. Where anxiety has been resolved in faith, that kind of "gift-giving" is present; and we recognize it as one of the marks of the true Church.

It is significant that in the actual performance of this mock drama the one that plays the part of I. W. Hooper has usually resisted every effort on the part of his callers to manipulate him by prescriptions, but has responded only in those instances where the visitors offered a simple human relationship without any strings attached. It would seem that, to some extent, all of us share Mr. Hooper's dilemma and perhaps, for that very reason, know that we shall not be helped by one that is anxiously trying to prove himself. When that anxiety is present as a compulsive force, the individual has already lost the self that he is striving to preserve. The effort to secure the self under the compulsion of anxiety succeeds only in alienating the self and in destroying the ground of its security and being in God.

We live under the impact of the fall of man. Insofar as we can stand off and view it at all, we do so through faith and in Christ. Indeed, it is only within the strength of that relationship that man has the courage to face his own sin. Every perspective is a fallen one. But man is not without hope so long as the image of God remains. For that image is a promise that is always finding fulfillment when broken

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and lost men turn from their anxious ways to the quiet strength and wholeness that is theirs before God.

### **VIEWS OF MAN**

We have set forth throughout this chapter the view that the crucial factor in the understanding of man's problem is his freedom. Although he is conditioned in many ways, man is still a creature of freedom and of inescapable decision. He is more than inert matter. His own will is a part of every action. If his life is a paradox, the decisive forces that shape that riddle must be sought within, not outside, man. It is equally true that since man's every perspective is a fallen one, he has an indefatigable propensity to locate the cause of his trouble in someone or something else. There is humor, as well as pathos, in Adam's effort to hide his own sin by blaming Eve. But that lady recovered quickly enough, and a hapless serpent was saddled with the blame!

The fact that Adam hid from God is symbolic of man's effort to escape responsibility for his own sin. Every view of human nature represents something of man's endless search for some other reason for his real condition. Hence, those that say that man is "nothing but" an animal, disregard the claims of the spirit and concentrate on man's animal-like-ness. On the other hand, those that regard man exclusively in terms of his mind or spirit conveniently forget the vital demands of the body. Either view, whether secular or quasi-Christian, leaves man certainly less human and the pawn of forces outside himself. The biblical view of man stands in contrast to either of these fragmented outlooks. In it man is fashioned in the image of God, and yet, apart from his relation to God, he remains but the dust of the earth.

Many within the fold of Christianity place less emphasis on the fall of man. They regard its consequences as less serious than does the view presented here. This is true particularly of those moral theologians whose concept of man suggests an orderly relation between nature and grace.

They deny the profound tragedy of the fall, since any admission of a radical break in man's relationship would preclude the necessary transition in their doctrine from man in nature to man in grace. Man's essential wholeness, they claim, is continuous and unbroken. Grace is simply the completion of the natural by divine action. And the fall is only a regression to a lower level, without impairment of man's essential goodness. One indication, in this view, that humanity has suffered no profound disruption is the tendency to regard man as able to do the good that he knows. Moral theology then becomes a codification of answers to behavior problems, answers that all too often are shallow and ready-made. Thus it would seem that the *a priori* solutions for human problems, offered by some casuists, betray an unconscious Pelagianism, that is, a denial of man's inability to live by moral rules. William Temple has noted this tendency in Thomism (if not in St. Thomas Aquinas himself) to underestimate "the awful pervasiveness and potency of sin" in all departments of human life, and he adds:

. . . the suggestion is easily given that if we can find the right spiritual and psychological technique for remedying what we have seen to be wrong, we can put ourselves right with God.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast to this view there is the biblical realism of St. Paul and prophetic Christianity, which insists that the fall is a radical disruption that reaches to the very roots of man's nature. In the fall man turns from God and loses his soul. Henceforth his life is motivated not by service to God, but by slavery to his own pride and anxiety. That slavery will not be broken either by "good intentions" or "good advice." The words of Luther's great hymn sound the depths of man's need of redemption:

<sup>10</sup> Quoted by Canon A. E. Baker in *William Temple and His Message* (Penguin Book, 1946), p. 60.

Did we in our own strength confide,  
Our striving would be losing;  
Were not the right man on our side,  
The man of God's own choosing.

A secularized version of this liberal view of man appears also in the thinking of those that make scientific method a philosophy of life. They seem to assume implicitly that an underlying harmony (or structure) of nature will reassert itself if the distortions of living conditions and, in some cases, the counsels of "antiquated religion" are removed. This combination of a rather light view of man's basic problems together with an antagonism to religion was characteristic of the early thinking of psychology. It is relatively absent in the thinking of psychiatry today, although some shock was created not long ago by the extreme statement of an eminent psychiatrist who warned against, what he called, "the artificially imposed inferiority, guilt and fear," fed by parents, teachers, priests, and "others with a vested interest" and urged that these be thrown off in order to have a lasting peace.<sup>11</sup> But in general, psychiatry has moved in the direction of limiting its general prescriptions for mankind's problems and of profoundly appreciating the ambivalence in man that complicates the throwing off of deep-seated attitudes.

In this connection, Christian thinkers will certainly admit that parents, teachers, and priests have it within their power to use their relation to children and others for neurotic ends. They participate, however, in a culture that tends to

<sup>11</sup> G. B. Chisholm, "The Reestablishment of Peacetime Society," in *Psychiatry*, IX (1946), 1-11. Dr. Chisholm seems to think that the crying need for this atomic age is "freedom from moralities . . . to think." The evil authorities who sell "poisonous certainties" and "artificially imposed inferiority" must be replaced by liberated thinking. Dr. Gotthard Booth in commenting on Dr. Chisholm's paper says, "It remains to be seen whether the substitute of the atomic bomb for old-fashioned hellfire will make people more responsible." ("Anxiety Concerning Disease," a paper presented to the Seminar on Religion and Health, Columbia University, New York, November, 1946.)

use any relationship for neurotic purposes. The Christian understanding of man, too, may be held in rigid terms and used to control others, just as medical knowledge may be exploited to dominate others. But the fact that the Christian understanding of man may be misused does not make it an "artificially imposed" burden. It is an insight that arises from an awareness of man's serious disruption in existence and his tragic division in sin.

In the Christian view of man, anxiety is that which distorts the original harmony of creation. Sin and guilt accompany the leap into existence, and man's life is marked by tragic ambivalence. His contradictions cannot be removed simply by letting the harmony re-establish itself. His wound is much too deep. In this connection it is interesting to note that most psychoanalysts appear to have abandoned the earlier view that the analyst exercises no direct control in the analysis and that therapy proceeds simply by the process of letting the harmony of nature reassert itself. Most analysts now agree that they have a responsibility to guide in some measure the course of the analysis. It is clear that any helper must go beyond the rule of "letting nature take its course," even though in most cases "nature" is on the side of health. The analyst that becomes concerned for the welfare of his patient beyond his consulting room because there is not a community that will support and sustain the changed person, has already moved in the direction of a more profound understanding of man's tragic condition. Psychiatry has been particularly successful in searching out the causes of man's illness. Its next task is to strengthen the hand of any force that makes for freedom and wholeness in the totality of man's living.

#### THE ROLE OF ANXIETY

The fact is that anxiety is at the base of man's life. It is always there, tempting man to reject the givenness of his existence and to build a fortress around himself against the

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world. It is anxiety that distorts the "Christian understanding" into a way of controlling others, as Dr. Chisholm justly observed; but anxiety will also distort any other interpretation since the anxious person always is driven, in all he undertakes, by his own insatiable need for security. A doctrine or a theory is easily converted into a "weapon" in the service of anxiety. What much scientific thought does not seem to recognize fully is the ineradicable character of anxiety. Indeed, the very multiplication of therapies for anxiety in our age is one indication that man is frantically searching for "balm" to heal this deep wound. In some ways our condition is like that of the late Middle Ages, when anxiety accompanied the break-up of the medieval synthesis and the people turned to pilgrimages, adorations, and indulgences in a desperate search for salvation. There was the same driving motive then to reduce therapy to techniques and thus to lay hold of salvation and to assuage anxiety. Today, this anxiety is evident in the loneliness of the individual and in the lack of real community life. Paul Tillich has written of this estrangement in modern man as follows:

Modern man has a profound feeling of estrangement or self-alienation from his genuine and true being, of enmity within himself and within his world, of separation from the ultimate source of being and meaning.<sup>12</sup>

Otto Rank observed the same "fear of being alone, of loneliness, the loss of the feeling of kinship with others, finally with the all," which compels man to flee before life and seek stable ground, even illusory stability, in neurotic behavior and frantic activity.<sup>13</sup>

If we keep in mind the universality of anxiety, the force

<sup>12</sup> Paul Tillich, "Estrangement and Reconciliation in Modern Thought," *Review of Religion*, IX (1944), 5.

<sup>13</sup> Otto Rank, *Will Therapy and Truth and Reality* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), p. 155.

of Freud's second anxiety theory gains renewed authority. It will be recalled that dynamic psychiatry reacted against certain mechanical aspects of Freud's thought. In an attempt to correct this, it introduced the cultural setting and the interpersonal factor that Freud had strangely ignored in the formulation of his instinct theories, though he certainly utilized them in his clinical work. But there is an implicit assumption in much dynamic psychiatry today that "man's nature, his passions, and anxieties are a cultural product."<sup>14</sup> Now if such a view means that it is in the interpersonal relations of culture that man experiences *anxiety* and *security*, this cannot be denied. But if by "cultural product" it is meant that the culture determines man's nature, as well as providing the opportunity for its expression and molding, it would seem that a new mechanism has replaced the old. Certainly, anxiety is affected by the cultural setting, but its deep-seated character goes beyond the determination of it by cultural manipulation.

For these reasons, it would seem that actually Freud's second theory of anxiety, which relates to the trauma of birth, is more profound than the views of those critics that retain the weakness of his mechanistic approach when they substitute culture for the sex instinct. Rank pointed the way to a solution with his theory of birth trauma. The traumatic feelings that accompany birth, according to his theory, remain operative throughout life, sometimes as a fear of life, again as a fear of death. Indeed, Rank believed that the fear of birth anticipates the fear of death, and that together these fears pervade life. Freud, while rejecting some elements of Rank's theory, held, nevertheless, that the anxiety associated with birth, by virtue of the helplessness of the infant, is a proto-type of the inescapable helplessness of existence itself, and thus a picture of anxiety in later life. But Freud went further. In his characteristic manner he assumed that

<sup>14</sup> Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, p. 13.

man veils the self-destructive impulse that arises from this helplessness in an aggressive drive against others.

For the Christian view of man, it would seem significant that anxiety is related to the helplessness of the infant at birth. Here is a moment when cultural factors are reduced to a minimum and the elemental factors of birth are universally applicable. It is true, of course, that the primal anxiety of life is intensified or reduced by the cultural and personal ways in which the child is treated after birth. A permissive Okinawan mother, who never allows herself to be separated from her child, produces a less anxious child than an "enlightened," but exacting, western mother, who gives over her child to a rigid and antiseptically sterile nursery. But this does not mean necessarily that the shock of birth and the anxiety of the infant at this moment is any different in one case than in the other. The elemental fact of anxiety corresponds to the elemental experience of birth, and both are inescapably involved in existence itself.

There seems to be a great deal of merit in the suggestion of Rank that the protective experience of the child before birth exercises great symbolic influence throughout life. The importance of the cult of The Blessed Mother in every major religion appears to be related to a deeply felt human need to secure again the experience of wholeness in the womb. In a striking passage in his book, *The Agony of Christianity*, Miguel de Unamuno tells of visiting, on St. Bernard's day in 1922, a Trappist monastery and of arriving during the singing of the impressive chant to Our Lady. He calls the chant a "cradle song" for disbirth, and he describes the monks as "surging backward, returning to infancy, gentle infancy, finding again on their lips the celestial taste of maternal milk," slipping back "to the sleep of the unborn."

#### SUMMARY

In his own heroic way Dietrich Bonhoeffer struggled, during the months just prior to his execution by the Nazis,

with the question that has been the theme of this chapter. Out of that struggle came a prayer the conclusion of which was:

Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.

Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am Thine! <sup>15</sup>

The crisis of existence is made concrete whenever man confronts that question. For therein man is faced with the inescapable choice between the alternatives: Either to rebel against the Godgivenness of his own being and anxiously to strive to purchase another self in pride, or to live by faith and trust in God. There is no magic word whereby to escape the threat of anxiety, but there is a confidence that comes of knowing Him, who has pierced the darkness from the other side.

<sup>15</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, trans. R. M. Fuller (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951), p. 15.

## MAN AS SINNER

When William of Sens, the prideful craftsman in “The Zeal of Thy House,” finds himself at death’s door and protests that his only sins—those of the flesh—have already been confessed, the archangel Michael confronts him:

“There where thy treasure is  
Thy heart is also. Sin is of the heart.”

“But,” William objects, “all my heart was in my work.”  
“Even so,” Michael replied.<sup>1</sup>

The blindness of William in thinking that his own involvement in sin went no deeper than an occasional yielding to the flesh, although his pride was magnified in his work, dramatically portrays the way sin masks its role in man’s life. Pride eludes scrutiny by shifting the emphasis from what one *is* to what one *does*, as Christ demonstrated in His parable of the Pharisee. Man is a sinner; and sin is of the heart. As long as one thinks only of what he does or can do, clothing his own actions with praiseworthy motives, he avoids the necessity of facing the deepest knowledge of himself. The New Testament states the matter with unmistakable clarity:

If we say we have no sin,  
We deceive ourselves,  
And the truth is not in us (John 1:8).

<sup>1</sup> Dorothy Sayers, “The Zeal of Thy House” in *The Questing Spirit*, eds. Halford Luccock and Frances Brentano (New York: Coward-McCann, 1947), p. 503. Used by permission of Miss Sayers.

In the previous chapter we presented the biblical view of man's creaturehood. We found his life to be a curious paradox, reflecting both the goodness of God's creation and the evil that is made manifest in actuality. For anxiety is the mark of finite freedom; and the fall of man accompanies his leap into existence. The primal anxiety, which is present in innocence, is translated into tragic anxiety and guilt. Spontaneous harmony is replaced by compulsive activity. Man has become a sinner, for sin is the act of turning away from the essential harmony with God under the threat of anxiety. It involves separation from the ground of existence, and surrender of the self to the tyranny of sin. It is sin because, ideally, faith could still the anxiety of existence by holding fast to the essential unity of man with God. Actually, as we pointed out in our discussion of the Genesis story of the fall, anxiety and sin are present before man is even aware that he has lost that innocence.

There are striking similarities between this classical Christian view of man's condition and some contemporary views of man put forth by humanistic psychology. Fromm, for example, develops the thesis that man experiences anxiety as he emerges from an original oneness with man and nature to the realization of his own freedom. In this anxiety he attempts to escape from his freedom by giving it over to new authorities. At this point, it is held, man's only alternative to his enslavement by this anxiety is to unite himself again with man and nature on a higher level, the level of spontaneous love and creative work. The Christian view, also, regards freedom as an occasion of anxiety, for it bears the possibility of peril, as well as of promise. Here, too, the solution is through a re-establishment of harmony, but in terms of faith. The similarity of these views, however, ends here; they cannot be equated. For the former attempts to explain man's anxiety as the product of his conditioning, which, since man is primarily a rational creature, may be eventually resolved by a new and more adequate under-

standing. The latter looks upon anxiety as an inevitable component of man's freedom, which has been destroyed from within by man's own act of separating himself from God. His freedom will be restored, and his anxiety resolved, not by anything he can do, but by his responding in love through faith to what God has done in Christ. The one view is called scientific (although its assumptions appear to have ultimate or religious significance), because it follows the discipline of science and works from the proposition that man's condition may be attributed to eventually controllable factors, such as historical and cultural circumstance. The other view is a frankly religious outlook that sees in the crisis of freedom and anxiety an enduring threat through which all men must live, regardless of the accidents of their historical condition. Moreover, the Christian holds that man is deeply wounded by his own separation in sin and that his health requires more than treatment for his maladjustment. Man as sinner is *sick unto death*. He will be healed only by that which, beyond the brokenness and lostness of his existence, restores him to a living relation to God. It is in this view of man as sinner, that Christian faith charts the tragic consequences of man's fall under the temptation of anxiety.

#### SIN AND AMBIGUITY

The origin of sin is inextricably bound up with the ambiguity of man's relation to himself and to his world. In self-consciousness he is able to observe himself somewhat objectively and to assess the world in which he lives. He is free, in some ways, of both and yet he is bound to each. He is unique in that he can look beyond himself; yet he remains a child of his own time and circumstance. Essentially, he participates in and possesses the innocence of God's good creation, but actually, his existence is marked by sin and guilt. So long as his innocence remains and he retains the harmony of his being, sin and guilt are not manifest in him; but at the moment the possibility of actualizing his

freedom presents itself, his primal anxiety is transformed into tragic anxiety, and he is prompted to sin. As Professor David Roberts of Union Seminary has pointed out in a paraphrase of Kierkegaard, a prohibition, such as that in the Genesis story of the fall, "merely induces dread because it awakens the possibility of freedom—a being able to do what, whether good or evil, he [man] does not yet know."<sup>2</sup>

Sin accompanies the act of taking over one's own freedom. It is an act propelled by anxiety, but the resulting sin is more than a simple equivalent of the primary drive. Anxiety is the condition, the spiritual climate, that nurtures sin. But it is a mistake to apply causal connections here. Indeed, the social scientist who "explains" the sinful behavior of man merely by disclosing the occasions of anxious strain is guilty of disregarding the freedom of man. For man has the freedom to transform the occasions of sin—occasions that are not necessarily sinful in themselves—into compulsive anxiety. Indeed, at the heart of man's sin is rebellion against the necessity of decision in freedom. Man rejects the givenness of his humanity, since it involves freedom and requires a response for realization; he flees from his manhood and envies the animal. It is this rebellion—and not the anxiety that is concomitant with freedom—that produces a twisted humanity, whose lost purpose is evident in

Ears that hear not,  
Eyes that see not,  
Tongues that speak not  
The glory of God made manifest!

Man is more than an object determined by outside forces. His capacity for freedom and choice together with his memory and his ability to anticipate consequences is evidence that he is not simply bound to the law of nature. Yet man is a dependent creature. The same factors that are

<sup>2</sup> David Roberts, "The Concept of Dread: A Review Article," *Review of Religion*, XI, 3, 276.

necessary to the life of other animals—air, food, water, etc.—are necessary conditions for his life, also. And his days, like those of the other animals, are numbered. Man is dependent, however, in a deeper sense. He cannot fulfill his life simply by existing. He is dependent upon community and the ability to communicate with others, and upon the experience of communion at every level of his existence. He needs more than himself to complete himself; but, as we have seen, his great temptation is to throw the whole justification for his existence outside himself. Man is a creature that must constantly repent, in his self-inflicted solitude, for the violence he has done to his necessary relation to others and to God. He can neither “go it alone,” nor “sign over” his freedom, although anxiety tempts him and sin propels him in both directions. He must find the fulfillment of his freedom and selfhood in the acceptance of his dependency and in the exercise of his freedom in relation to God. This basic ambiguity together with its consequences in terms of man’s fall, sin, and redemption is a crucial element in the Christian view of man.

#### ORIGINAL SIN

Man’s original and continuing sin is that he has “exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever!” (Romans 1:25). To be a sinner is not only to separate oneself from God, but also to worship a false god and, ultimately, to worship and serve a thinly disguised image of the self. Sin is more than self-centeredness or egotism. It is rebellion against God and worship of the self. Man cannot be indifferent to God. He either worships God and accepts dependence on Him, or he defies God and worships himself. It is in this sense that Christ, the revelation of God, becomes a scandal to every man who is in sin. For in that crucial encounter man is judged, and his idolatry revealed.

The Christian doctrine of original sin has been of genuine service to man in his understanding of himself. It is "good news" to those whose struggle in sin leaves them bewildered about moral failure. There is democracy in its inclusiveness. For not only those who "sin," not alone the "sinful," but *all* men are sinners. That truth speaks to the deepest truth in every heart. It is significant that the doctrine of the fall and of sin, implicit in the Genesis account, is an afterthought, a sign that man was growing increasingly conscious of the fact that human existence is contradictory. The doctrine itself reflects this growing consciousness in the fact that the fall is not simultaneous with creation. There is a paradise and an expulsion from it; and man, in reflection, "remembers" his created goodness and harmony by contrasting it with his present broken existence. Thus the Christian doctrine affirms the goodness of creation of which man is a part and faces up to the fact that created harmony is lost in the fall. The Greek dichotomy between flesh and spirit is avoided, because, whether in his essential or existential condition, Christian man acts, not through a part, but through the totality of his being. He cannot be understood simply in terms of flesh or spirit. Accordingly, the Christian asserts that the depth of man's sin is more profound in this view than it would be in a view that attributed it to the remaining vestiges of "ignorance" or to the "primitiveness" in man.

Like every human concept, "original sin" has been used in the service of other prevailing ideas. A literal interpretation of the biblical story and an enthusiasm for causal connection has twisted it, in many cases, to mean that the sin of Adam has been inherited from generation to generation. This mechanical view has been the subject of countless theological controversies in the Christian Church and, we would suspect, an issue of great concern to many "troubled consciences" today. Without going into the controversy, we may say that a good company of Christian thinkers today

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regard sin as *original* only in the sense that Adam was both himself and the human race, and became, therefore, the bearer of that solidarity that the ancient world knew. In this view it is held that, as a symbol, "original sin" represents what actually happens in the experience of every man. Kierkegaard has pointed out that the Greek Church calls original sin "the sins of the fathers," a characterization that can refer only to a historically concluded fact, but leaves room for the understanding of sin as a condition arising directly in each individual.

Sin is rooted in man's finite freedom, as we concluded in the previous chapter. In the possibility of freedom man succumbs to anxiety and becomes guilty. But guilt does not come as a necessity; it can arise only in the case of a man that is free in his essential nature. Man incurs guilt precisely because he is free to sin. Here is one of the unresolved paradoxes of Christianity, for it postulates that man remains responsible even while he is driven to sin in existence. On this problem of sin and man's responsibility, Reinhold Niebuhr writes:

The actual sin is the consequence of the temptation of anxiety in which all life stands. But anxiety alone is neither actual nor original sin. Sin does not flow necessarily from it. Consequently the bias toward sin from which actual sin flows is anxiety plus sin. Or in the words of Kierkegaard, sin presupposes itself. Man could not be tempted if he had not already sinned.<sup>3</sup>

### SIN AND GUILT

Man becomes guilty, but not by necessity. His guilt is evidence that in the fall man does not cease to be man. His freedom and creativity remain, even during his servitude to sin. They are changed, however, by the tragic anxiety of

<sup>3</sup>Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), I, 250. Used by permission of the publisher.

existence into something less than the spontaneous freedom and creativity of God's creation. And in moments that are free of all pretense man knows the loss of that spontaneity; his life becomes burdensome. But in that he knows his loss, man exercises the essential nature that is his.

In *Will Therapy*, Otto Rank has developed the thesis that "creative guilt" arises from the fact of a creative God, and he cites this development as especially characteristic of western culture. In this view creative guilt can only be atoned for through new creation. But here is the precise point of difficulty for man. His anxiety restricts his creativity to fleeting moments that are conspicuous by their contrast to the rest of his harassed existence. He cannot be creative without, at the same time, being anxious. The weight of guilt and its unfailing component, hostility, press heavily upon the conscience of modern man, and his *unfulfilled creativity* becomes another factor limiting his existence. Jeremiah voiced a lament that speaks for many in every age: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jeremiah 8:20).

Thus guilt is planted as deep as anxiety. Granted that guilt takes on the character of internalized authority and that man seldom consciously selects the real object of his guilt feeling, it still must be maintained that any view that reduces guilt entirely to unreal, internal reflections is hardly in accord with the real and tragic character of human existence. The Christian doctrine of sin has avoided a fatal determinism, by insisting that man is both responsible and guilty, and that his guilt must be dealt with realistically, since it cannot be resolved simply by explaining it.

The Christian distinguishes between real guilt and "guilt feelings." For the latter belong to the area of pathology and must be dealt with as psychic injuries. "Guilt feelings" are neurotic distortions of one's actual responsibility, distortions that spring from illusion and fear. A child who is too often reminded that "Mother knows best" may later

feel unnecessarily guilty every time he acts in terms of his own rightful interest. Real guilt, on the other hand, is an inevitable component of man's relation to man. It is that deep awareness—innermost in every self—that we have been tried and found wanting. It serves to remind man not only that he is a creature who makes decisions, but that he must stand under judgment for the use he makes of that freedom. The ultimate picture of guilt is one of personal responsibility before the holiness of God. For an Isaiah, that experience evoked an expression of guilt and repentance that could hardly be dismissed as "guilt feelings":

Woe is me! For I am lost;  
for I am a man of unclean lips,  
And I dwell in the midst of a people of  
unclean lips . . . (Isaiah 6:5).

Christian theology and some contemporary views in psychology are at variance in this matter of dealing with sin and guilt. This is not surprising when one considers their different approaches to human problems. Even if it could be granted that "neurosis" and "sin" refer to the same set of facts, the theologian measures sin against the absolute claims of God, whereas the psychologist regards neurosis in the light of the culture in which the individual lives. But the psychologist who takes into account the cultural and individual aspects of guilt feelings often has tended to reduce them to neurotic manifestations. Although the Christian view of guilt has been sharpened and made more precise by these insights from clinical psychology, it still affirms the reality of guilt. In this view the experience of guilt is not necessarily a sign of neurosis. Rather it is a profound demonstration of the fact that man knows, and cannot escape, something of his own responsibility in freedom.

The relation of theology and psychology becomes even more complex when we consider their practical roles. At

first sight those roles seem to be clearly distinctive. The Christian treatment of sin and guilt is guided by the doctrine of man's alienation from God, as symbolized in the fall and original sin. Psychology, on the other hand, deals with the difficulties man suffers in his interpersonal relations and the compulsive anxiety that denies him the satisfactions of living. The goal of Christian salvation is the restoration of man to God, a restoration which heals man in every relation. The goal of therapy is the renewal and rediscovery of the self in interpersonal terms. Thus far, there would seem to be no conflict between the two views, inasmuch as they are dealing with man in different aspects of his being. Indeed, there are those who insist that this simple distinction be maintained in therapy and in pastoral work. Some Roman Catholic writers take this view, when distinguishing between the manner of handling guilt in analysis and its treatment in confession.<sup>4</sup> They define sin as *malum culpeae*, the evil men do, conceived in a voluntary sense, and neurosis as a *malum poenae*, an evil men suffer or undergo. The compulsive aspect of neurosis is stressed in contrast to the voluntary nature of sin.

Such theoretical distinctions may be helpful in making clear the different approaches to the problem of sin and neurosis, but actually both voluntary and involuntary action are involved in the human situation; and neither may be isolated and treated independently, as these definitions seem to imply. The psychologist may find it necessary to deal with religious matters, and the confessor certainly must be aware of neurotic tendencies if he is to be of real service. From the point of view of Christian faith the multiplication of guilt and hostility in man's life can be dealt with only by a view that brings healing not only in interpersonal relations, but also in the relation to the ground of existence—to God.

<sup>4</sup> See Victor White, "The Analyst and the Confessor," *The Commonweal*, XLVIII (1948), 348-49.

Within the context of this understanding, therapy may proceed to correct neurotic guilt and, also, to heal the deepest source of man's guilt.

The deepest source of man's guilt is the awareness of his distance from God—the shattering experience of knowing both dependence on God and judgment by Him. Without that relationship to God, the distortions in guilt feelings to which psychologists point are abundantly present. The secular world cannot confess its guilt because it recognizes neither the judgment of God nor His mercy in forgiveness. It knows only, what the Bible calls, "the wrath of God." Faith provides the clue that turns the experience of guilt into an occasion of returning and rest in God. In the final analysis the resolution of man's guilt is possible only within the realm of repentance, grace, and forgiveness.

#### SOME ASPECTS OF MAN AS SINNER

Sin is more than moral inconsistency, more than a failure to be true to one's highest standards. It is an infection that attacks the roots of human action. In sin man succumbs, in the depths of his being, to inordinate pride. He loses that which he is in the fullness of creation, and becomes that which he is in separation: a slave to sin. The work of original sin is so deeply planted in the human race that this alien slavery has lost its foreign aspect. Its spiritual climate has become as familiar and as seemingly harmless as the words of the child's spelling exercise:

In Adam's fall  
We sinnéd all.

Man's slavery to sin, a running theme of the Bible, envelops and hampers his right choices. This is something that sentimental moralists will never learn. Their emphasis upon the formula, "You can do it if you try hard enough," fails to discern the persistent pride in man's heart, the rank

slavery to sin that all too often motivates such efforts. T. S. Eliot's prayer is relevant:

O Lord deliver me from the man of excellent  
Intention and impure heart . . .<sup>5</sup>

A glance at the references to sin in the Bible can hardly escape giving one the impression that the crucial concern with sin is not its missing the mark ethically, important as that is, but the spread and dominance of sin over man's life. The Bible wastes little time on ethical refinements, but it is vitally concerned with the ultimate commitments of man's life, whether they be to sin or to God. This emphasis on the power of sin is made emphatic in the Lord's words to Cain after he had angrily defied the Creator:

If you do well, will you not be accepted?  
And if you do not well, sin is couching at the door;  
its desire is for you, but you must master it (Genesis  
4:7).

These words bring us back to the paradox of sin and guilt. In sin man becomes the slave of sin. He strives to hide his sin in vain platitudes while, at the same time, he may plead helplessness before its power. Yet even though man alone is incapable of good works, at the deepest level he is responsible for his behavior. Sin desires him, but he must master it. No man escapes the temptations of anxiety. Every man has reason to worry about the acceptance of his gift. The really crucial matter is whether or not he has succumbed to the temptation of anxiety in his heart. The driving force behind man's servitude to sin is anxiety. The lash of that whip remains an ever present threat. It may become associated with specific fears, such as the fear of meeting other people, or the fear of decision, or the fear of death. But it

<sup>5</sup>T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), p. 105. Used by permission of the publisher.

continues as a pervasive threat beyond every occasion of fear. For the Hebrews, en route to freedom from the tyranny of Pharaoh, the subversive power of anxiety found its mark in the pain of their cry:

. . . It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness (Exodus 14:12).

That is the cry of an old slavery that is forever finding new expression in man's life. It is the enemy of his freedom, and it eludes all efforts to track it down. Even so, in troubled dreams and in days filled with exacerbated wakefulness, man experiences the full weight and wearing pain of this psychic cramp! As one person said ironically, on being informed that he talked in a disturbed manner while asleep, "I don't dream, but I must have something to talk about." That "something" of anxiety finds ways of expressing itself. It forces much human behavior into meaningless channels, meaningless except in the sense that these channels serve to prevent the individual from facing his real motives. Anxiety is the climate for sin. It undermines the effort to achieve genuine selfhood, by emphasizing the pain of freedom. But that unrealized selfhood—that death in the midst of life—leaves man further isolated and cut off from God and man. This loneliness is the deepest pain. Thus man, as sinner, is blinded by the very power of the sin that holds him in its grasp. This is slavery, the curse of sin.

#### SIN AS SELF-WORSHIP

For biblical religion the perennial sin of man is false worship. It is hardly an accident that the first two commandments not only deal with false worship, but actually proscribe the worship of images. The secret behind every image is that it is made and manipulated by man himself. Whether in disguise or in open defiance of God, self-worship is at the heart of every false worship.

When man rejects his creaturely relation to God, he

comes more and more to depend on “self-made” gods. The “images” that modern man worships may be more sophisticated than the golden calf or the idols of the ancient world, but for that very reason they are more dangerous. The modern idolatries may take forms that seem innocent and praiseworthy enough—patriotism, social reform, and personal disciplines among a host of others, but pride, in many cases, rots at the core the fruit of these endeavors. The heart of genuine patriotism, like that which breathed in Abraham Lincoln, does not shun judgment, but rather welcomes it in the prayer that “this nation under God may have a new birth of freedom.” In contrast stand the men of Moscow, who, like the self-appointed masters of conscience in America, seem to have hit upon the success formula: he who shouts loudest, claims most, and answers to no one shall win the most adherents! But God is not mocked. Nor shall His people be long impressed with brazen idolatry. After all, there is a sequel to one of our often quoted texts where doing the will of the Father is preferred over pious words:

On that day many will say to me,

“Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?”

And then will I declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers” (Matthew 7:22-23).

No number of loud claims or of impressive “works” shall be able to hide the fact that it is through these means that men worship themselves.

The disciplines of personal religion have multiplied in this age of anxiety. In many quarters this has been taken to signify a revival of religion. There can be little doubt that, for the first time in many decades, men are asking the questions that call for the answers of faith. But it is also true that this disturbed questioning is being exploited by some who, with ready-made answers, promise the recipient the power

to control the Divine! The tragedy of much of the "self-help" literature of this age is that it covers with a thin veneer the treacherous break-throughs in man's inner-life, which, if taken more seriously as opportunities for self-knowledge, could lead to profound renewal rather than to bitter frustration. For all its confidence, Christianity is not a grand detour around suffering, but a highway through the "valley" and the "shadow" to the presence of God. Popular religion, on the other hand, can sometimes be a refined version of man's persistent idolatry.

Anxiety lies behind man's worship of himself. His independence from God never seems to be clearly established. He is constantly engaged in the effort of trying to prove himself, in insisting that he is the captain of his own soul. But to use a word from psychology, he *dissociates* every bit of evidence, coming his way, that indicates that his existence is dependent upon God. His own insecurity is laid bare in that constant protestation of independence. He "protests too much," listing his virtues like another Job, yet all the while desiring to see the "book" in which the Almighty has written the real facts. Beneath his arrogance and self-worship man is betrayed by an anxiety that constantly reveals his insecurity.

#### SIN AS SELF-HATRED

The paradox of man's sinfulness is that this sinfulness is a self-worship that is at the same time a self-hatred. Under the threat of anxiety man rejects both his dependence upon God and the self that God has given him. Selfishness, as opposed to genuine self-love and self-respect under God, is grounded in man's unwillingness to accept himself. In pride, a man will measure himself defiantly against God, while at the same time he sees himself through his proud imagination, not as he actually is, but as his vanity wishes him to appear. Here is the driving force behind the tyranny of the "should" and the moral "oughtness" that is so much a part

of our common life. Even the gifts of faith, such as the virtues described in the Sermon on the Mount, can be transformed into demonic forces when they are sought apart from faith. Many a Christian, as an imitator of Christ, has undermined his own witness when he has permitted himself to forget that "these things" described in the Beatitudes are added only when one seeks "first His Kingdom and His righteousness." (The whole of St. Matthew's text is relevant here.) The claims of Christ are intended for those who know His love; but the constant anxiety to appear always "in the right," and the oppressive use of righteousness as a means of controlling others can hardly be classified as expressions of answering love. Behind this misuse of the goals of Christian living lies an inner betrayal: a profound distrust of one's own acceptableness and a constant need to prove one's worth. Self-hatred, as well as self-worship, resides at the core of man's sin.

The fact that human existence is weighted with man's tragic self-hatred is daily confirmed in the experience of every counselor. The excess of anger that finds expression in personal and social life has become the concern of many students of human behavior. Karl Menninger, the psychiatrist, writes: "There is everything to make us believe that man's chief fears are not of the immensity of the universe but of the malignity of his own aggressive instincts."<sup>6</sup> Certainly, there is much evidence to lead us to agree that hostility is a widespread and overwhelming fact in our common life, hostility that can be turned against the world or against the self with equal force. It is the inevitable component of unresolved anxiety. Man's anger in his insecurity underlies his self-contempt, as well as his self-glorification. Anxiety determines his total attitude toward himself and the world. Its ready conversion into hostility is manifested in the familiar tensions and bitterness of modern life. We should

<sup>6</sup> Karl Menninger, *Love Against Hate* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1943), p. 190.

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be reminded, however, that angry aggressiveness is not a phenomenon peculiar to modern man. St. Paul was sufficiently familiar with its appearance to describe man as being "full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, [and] they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God . . . foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless" (Romans 1:29-30).

It would seem to us that any attempt to locate the root of sin exclusively in either self-hatred or inordinate self-love is to overlook the fact that both attitudes are consequences of man's separation from God. That separation from God under the threat of anxiety together with the resulting false worship is the root of sin. Both self-glorification and self-contempt do violence to man's given relation with God. Both are intensified by the anxiety that man feels; and as psychiatry has amply demonstrated, these ambivalent attitudes may exist in the same person at the same time. The resulting contradictory behavior is a picture of sin: it is a false worship that alternates between self-worship and self-hatred.

### CORPORATE SIN

Man as sinner always lives in the community of sin in proximity to other sinners. The fact of corporate sin and its tendency to perpetuate itself in communal life becomes more significant for every one of us when we remember that it is within the intimate family life that community for the child begins. Here his character is shaped, and much depends upon the emotional stability and moral health of the parental figures. It is here that a frustrated and hostility-ridden mother or surrogate can wield a devastating influence on the growth and health of a child under her care. Thus the sin of one generation is inflicted upon another, and insecurity is perpetuated. A father who will not accept his son sets the stage for that son's desperate effort to find the love and support that has been denied him in ways that may involve him in great pain and further sin.

The view that we hold here is that community and interpersonal involvement in sin does not explain anything more than the occasion of its continuance. There can be no doubt that every person is shaped in large measure by the environment in which he lives. But that environment, particularly in its spiritual and emotional aspects, is constantly being altered by the decisions made by man. In the Christian view, the crucial temptation of anxiety inevitably confronts the solitary individual. He cannot escape that decision. But in his capitulation to sin, he extends the reign of sin in corporate life. The parent, whose consuming desire is to "keep the peace" and avoid conflict and who, therefore, succumbs to the temptation to manage and to insulate his or her children, may discover too late that the withheld gift of genuine relationship has destroyed the family from within. Thus, every interpersonal relation provides the opportunity of one person's use of another to relieve his own anxiety and to perpetuate sin.

The role of sin in the mass movements of modern history can hardly be overlooked. The apparently successful collectivist societies, whose remarkable unity and power seems to be achieved at the cost of "dead-level" conformity, are motivated by a common idolatry; and the result has been disastrous not only for those that have been enslaved by the totalitarians but also for those that have been the victims of their brutal "brain-washing" techniques. The fact that strong men have been broken under the weight of that terror may prompt a reappraisal of our own uncertain faith. But the strength of totalitarianism may also prove to be its weakness. When man becomes an automaton, he is bereft of his humanity and of the will to adapt freely to new situations. In the Christian understanding of history, civilizations rise and fall according to the way in which they manage the corruptions of pride within themselves. When a Russian farm manager refuses to harvest sugar beets in the

middle of a food famine because the yield would be greater than his "estimate," the seeds of destruction seem to have produced their flower within that nation.<sup>7</sup>

In every case of anxiety described in this study, sin and community involvement have been closely associated. Although we do not hold that there is a mechanical relation between the two, we have pointed out frequently that it is in interpersonal relations that the child learns the patterns of response and relates himself to the world. As Sullivan has observed, the child's patterns of behavior, even of neurotic behavior, are the tools which he uses in getting along with the world. These tools are power mechanisms, whether they be loud cries or passive behavior.

As an illustration of community involvement in an aggressive orientation, here is the case of Norma, who comes to the counselor because she is having difficulty in getting along with her friends. They think that she is too bold, and they "gang up on her." Further investigation reveals that Norma is aggressive and tends to be hostile and suspicious in her relations with women. Significantly, her mother is an extremely hostile woman, who attacks the girl in the presence of other people, prefers her male children to Norma, and boasts that she is much prettier than her daughter. In such a situation one can imagine that Norma learned to fight for herself early in life; her compulsive hostility now remains a problem even in her normal relations with girl friends. In every relationship she unconsciously applies the formula that "worked" in her relation to her mother; but that formula is unnecessary now and is challenged by her compeers. Her compulsive continuance of this attitude threatens to isolate her and to deny her the satisfactions of genuine companionship. Her problem is complicated by the fact that it seems easier to fight than to

<sup>7</sup> See Helmut Gollwitzer, *Unwilling Journey—A Diary from Russia* (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1953). The whole of this remarkable account of a German chaplain who was a slave laborer in Russia is worth study for a practical Christian understanding of Communism at work.

relate in a world in which so many people are "fighting mad."

Another relatively young woman comes to the counselor with the problem of her broken marriage. Her husband has been involved with another woman and a child is expected. She blames herself because she has failed to produce a child. But the husband has been involved with other women several times before, and even now he is more concerned about the pregnant woman than he is about his wife's needs. She accepts this, or seems to, and feels called upon to defend him. She is "ready to do what he wants," although this had previously involved taking care of another woman, pregnant by him; and it now means giving him a quick divorce.

It would seem that the counselee's own desires never reach direct expression; and even now, as she faces the loss of her husband whom she loves, she is unable to do otherwise than as someone else wants. Her attitude reaches back to childhood when she was constantly compared unfavorably to her brother by her mother, who used to assure her that she would not "get by on her looks." The counselee's complete attitude reflects a passive compliance. This compliance certainly was a factor in her unsatisfactory marriage adjustment and will continue to limit her mature human relationships until resolved. The tenacity of that compliance can be understood only when it is recognized that this is her way of controlling others.

Therapy in both of these cases would eventually include an understanding of the relevance of the behavior pattern (hostile or compliant) in the early situation, and of the ways in which it has been carried over into adult life. One would hope that the outcome of such therapy would be not only an ability to accept and enjoy relations with other people as they really are, but also some awareness of how these habitual ways of relating to others represent the means of sinful control of them. These cases illustrate how in-

timately associated sin and power mechanisms may become in the actual process of living. The behavior pattern in each case is "explained" in terms of an earlier necessary adjustment; and yet the very condition that made these adjustments necessary in the first place points to an unresolved primal anxiety that provides the soil for the growth of compulsive anxiety. In existence, anxiety, like other slave masters, cannot be appeased. It must be resolved in faith, as well as understood and corrected in its behavior manifestations. Here, then, the task of therapy and religion would be combined: the one striving to reduce the exaggeration of compulsive anxiety, and the other bringing reconciliation in the depths of the soul.

Without that reconciliation the insecure self must constantly seek assurances of its own power and importance in a compulsive struggle against doubt and anxiety. It must seek to hide and repress its ultimate helplessness under a cloak of dogmatic assertiveness or habitual desperation, attitudes which grow daily in the service of spiritual arrogance. War, injustice, and prejudice become the bearers of this accumulating sin in community life. Man's conflict with his neighbor stems from that ultimate unresolved conflict within himself and before God. Those who would make little of the ultimate healing that is needed must stand under the judgment of Jeremiah,

They have healed the wound of my people lightly,  
saying, "Peace, Peace,"  
when there is no peace (Jeremiah 6:14).

Indeed, the prophets had rightly concluded that there is an intimate and direct connection between social injustice and the inordinate concern for one's own security.

#### SIN AND ANXIETY

The fact is that without release from anxiety in the depths of his being, man is consumed, either in pride or

contempt, with self-concern. He is "so concerned about himself that he cannot release himself for the adventure of love."<sup>8</sup> Without God man's primary concern is to secure himself against the anxious dread that dwells in his heart, a dread that Kierkegaard described as "so hidden in a man that he himself does not know it." Still it drives him on and attaches itself to specific objects in his human relations. Bodily functions, such as sex or eating, become the bearers of this anxiety when their natural and wholesome functions are made to serve its compelling drive for security. Drunkenness and other ways of escape give the illusion of peace regained. One's relations with one's self or with others come to serve the desperate purpose of proving that one is not quite so insecure as he feels in the dark moments of his life. There is little wonder that man constantly seeks release from the tension of life or that he continues to flee down the "labyrinthine ways," further and further away from his genuine selfhood and God, for in primal anxiety he has turned away from the source of his unity and peace. This turning away from God is sin, and it carries in its wake frustration, constant self-laceration, and a sense of helpless guilt.

Thus, basically, sin is the unwillingness to be one's self as a child of God, or in the formulation that Kierkegaard used, sin is despair of willing to be one's self. In sin anxiety becomes the compelling force of life, and the self becomes rigid. Obsessive patterns are repeated with maddening regularity, while the self is at the mercy of outward circumstance. The actual issues of life, whether outward or inward, are merely the screens on which the deeper struggle with anxiety is projected. Man the sinner is a closed-off, isolated self who struggles to reduce life to simple rules that can be applied without committing the whole self. Perhaps this is the secret of religion's ageless struggle against legalism. For the latter, in its excessive variety, represents man's

<sup>8</sup> Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, I, 272.

effort to ground his security in legal definitions that, by their rigidity, betray an underlying insecurity. St. Paul seems to have understood the danger of such a view when he wrote that when he "delighted in the law," he saw another law in his innermost self, "making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members" (Romans 8:23). Man's sin drives him to seek security in rules and to hope for salvation in endless activity. His peace, says Christian faith, lies in "returning and rest" before God.

The Christian community is not exempt from the debilitating struggle with anxiety, and delight in the law has been one of its recurring problems. It is a fact of tragic consequence that the Christian Church itself has too often become the expression of "dead-level conformity," which has rendered it unable to deal with present moral problems, whether they be individual or social. Law, rather than liberty, has frequently characterized the New Covenant. Legal rules which define that which is permissible rather than that which is morally relevant, have been the content of some moral theology. A practical result has been an emphasis on various sins rather than on the inner disruption of the whole personality in sin. The Jesuit, J. J. Slater, speaks for a wide segment of the Church, inside and outside of Rome, on the handling of the excessively scrupulous person whose groundless fear causes him to confess things that are not sinful. The writer advises the confessor to tell the over-scrupulous person "to act boldly and fearlessly, that he may do whatever is not obviously forbidden, and that it is impossible for one who wishes to serve God to commit sin, especially grave sin, without being aware of it."<sup>8</sup> Now certainly such advice is good for those who can make use of it; but when driving anxiety stands back of the "scrupulous" ritual, the absolution of the Church without the advice (unless it is to go deeper) will possibly help more. And

<sup>8</sup> J. J. Slater, *Manual of Moral Theology* (New York: Benziger Bros., 1909), I, 79.

the concern of the confessor with symptoms and legally defined sins leaves much to be done before the absolution of the Church can meet and resolve the anxiety that lies back of both.

The tendency of some moral theologians to apply Thomistic formulations to modern moral problems results in questionable advice for moral health. Harton, in his *The Elements of the Spiritual Life*, seems to lack a dynamic understanding of the relation of human behavior to underlying anxiety. In one section he warns against the "danger and fact of concupiscent imaginings," calling it particularly to the attention of those in charge of children because "here the habit of day-dreaming most often begins." He adds:

The practice of day-dreaming is dangerous for this reason (the imagination is impatient of control). Day-dreams practically always center around self, and, it is easy for the Devil to slip in his temptations for its ruin. It should be realized that the imagination is the Devil's point of direct contact with the soul, whence he attacks the mind and the will.<sup>10</sup>

The vision of thought-control nursery teachers arises from such speculations; but we would predict that even they would fail to regulate day-dreams, especially where fantasy outshines reality.

The great mistake of such a view is that it divides the self into artificial segments, when a view of the whole personality is needed. Day-dreams, like other symptoms, are a part of the total personality, and they operate as do other symptoms: to enable the personality to function without more serious disruption. A child who day-dreams excessively has a reason for doing so, and help should come not in the direction of further repression, but in that warm and confidence-giving spirit of Christian love that will draw the

<sup>10</sup> F. P. Harton, *The Elements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1948), p. 118. Used by permission of the publisher.

child into fuller participation in the real things of his life and into honesty and truth about himself. Reality must be made more attractive than fantasy, if moral health is to develop.

Genuine spiritual health for the individual depends not on rules for the regulation of his life, but upon effective dealing with the underlying anxiety that blocks his spiritual development. The very fact that although the Church has the resources to deal with the basic anxiety of existence, its practice can be so easily transformed into rigid rules is proof again of the force of anxiety in man's life. The Church, in the petition of a familiar prayer, stands in constant need of purification from corruption, direction from error and reformation where it is amiss. It must be added that the Church is today not without leaders who are enriching by their studies the field of depth psychology and applying these insights to the fact of man's sin. Indeed, great theology has always been based on a profound psychological understanding of man; Freud and St. Augustine are co-workers in the field of human understanding.

#### SUMMARY

Behind man's sin is the real self, the self that God intended. Despite the slavery of sin, man at heart never gives up the effort to recover unity within himself, with his world, and with God. Even sin may serve a positive purpose if it drives one to seek genuine health and salvation. If, like the prodigal son, man comes to his senses (though he find himself "among the swine"), his salvation has begun. Boisen describes in one paper the case of a patient who, as a boy, was disturbed about the management of the sex drive.<sup>11</sup> His worry forced him to seek help in a religious meeting where Moody was preaching a message of God's forgiveness. The experience set the boy free of self-judg-

<sup>11</sup> Anton T. Boisen, "The Problems of Sin and Salvation in the Light of Psychopathology," *Journal of Religion*, XXII, 3, 288-301.

ment, since he responded to the "good news" of God's judgment and grace. Despite the fact that many problems remained, the boy's health was improved by the overcoming of his isolation in Christian community and of his estrangement from God in the message of forgiveness. As Boisen points out, consciousness of sin was the first step in this individual's salvation. When a man claims even his sin as his *own*, he has turned the corner toward recovered freedom and the outreach of God's love.

Thus far in our study we have attempted to describe the anxiety that motivates man's life and its relation to sin. We have held that both compulsive activity and sin are related to the primal anxiety that man experiences in existence. Compulsive activity, then, is structured by the cultural and interpersonal relations which bear upon the individual, while sin is man's desperate effort to secure himself against the anxiety he feels in isolation and apart from faith in God. In actual life both sin and compulsive activity are intimately associated.

In the remaining chapters, we shall consider what happens when through Christian faith man faces himself in sin and in that primal anxiety that stands back of his sin. In the Christian view man's life is tragic and contradictory because of sin. His wound will not be healed lightly. But then, the Cross and its implications for all men is no light matter, either. In the shadow of that infinite torture every man may see his life as an end and a beginning. As Reinhold Niebuhr has said, "If we can weep for ourselves as men, we need not weep for ourselves as man."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *Beyond Tragedy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. 169.



*Part III*

**TOWARD RESOLVING ANXIETY  
IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**



## MAN IN RECONCILIATION

"There must be something more than this!" These words point to the depth of modern man's disappointment in the life he knows. Somehow, life never seems to "come off." A character in a recent novel, after embezzlement and abandonment of his family, sends a part of his stolen money home as an act of contrition. In his return address, he uses the name, "A. Traveler." Many a man feels that he is a stranger and a sojourner in a world of aliens. For the Christian, the recognition of that alienation from himself, his neighbor, and God is the beginning of life in faith. But the hard fact of separation must be faced as the first act of faith.

Christian faith accepts the fact that man is a sinner. It also knows the tragic character of his sin. When driven by an anxiety that he has failed to resolve in faith or to accept in finitude, man's existence abounds in shattering isolation and contradictory impulses. He is neither happy nor free, an exile from his created harmony, seeking constantly a new Jerusalem to replace his lost paradise. The Christian message is also one of reconciliation. It is a message of man's recovery of health and unity within himself and his world by God's help. And reconciliation begins for man when he faces himself in genuine self-examination.

### FACING THE SELF

In a world that is already organized to prevent people from ever coming face to face with themselves, it is difficult

for the individual to know the real facts about his self. It has been said that, unlike the loss of a limb, the loss of the genuine self can pass quite unnoticed. Man's existence is too often a mad rush to escape this very self. Buried in the unconscious, anxiety covers its dwelling place by making life a "busy" affair and setting a pace that prevents one from ever coming to grips with the real propelling force of his life. Anxiety even robs sleep of its "sweet innocence," for to sleep so often means to dream of trouble in disguised symbols.

It was in dreams, however, that Freud began to see the possibilities of psychoanalysis, thus inaugurating a new era in self-understanding. Throughout the ages men have gained inner awareness by opening their hearts and secret thoughts to themselves, as to God; but today, in the techniques of depth psychology, man possesses new and exciting means for self-understanding. A rigorous honesty is required if one is to face himself, an honesty that must be matched by a faith at least equal to the anxiety that drives him on.

Let it be frankly stated that honesty is no easy matter. For the self under scrutiny, it is like pains of death that came upon the Psalmist in his trouble and heaviness:

The snares of death compassed me round about,  
And the pains of hell gat hold upon me (Psalm 116:3).

Perhaps this is a deeper meaning of the agony and struggle of Calvary: one must be ready for a struggle of this dimension in his battle to recover his God-given self from the servitude of sin. It is certain that pain is associated with the process of recovering self-awareness. The sergeant afflicted with gross tremor, whom we discussed earlier, had to pay a price in worry and agitation before learning the cause of his anxiety and mastering it. Self-searching before God involves the pain of guilt and the terror of eventual judgment that no man escapes. He who would know the

truth about himself must pass over this threshold of deep awareness.

While agonizing struggle is the inevitable cost of self-knowledge, it is in Kierkegaard's phrase "absolutely educational." It reveals the deceptions and flights from reality with which the self "busies" itself; it is a solitary battle like Jacob's struggle in the desert at night. Psychotherapy places much emphasis upon reliving experience. The Christian in prayer, self-examination, and worship gathers up his life again before God in order to remove that which separates him from God. It is necessary in both that one dwell upon the self as it actually is, as well as the self which, in pride, strives to be. All such searching leads back eventually to man's proud imagination and to God's judgment; but that judgment brings "saving health," as does a surgeon's knife, in that it provides the basis of confessing and returning to Him, who gave man being. When face to face with God, man finds reconciliation at the further end of self-searching.

When man confronts himself and God, he must be prepared to bear fully a knowledge of his own sin. Genuine reconciliation demands this. His real motives are laid bare. His self-division and isolation from God and his world are made inescapably apparent. In biblical terms his consuming self-preoccupation (anxious self-concern) is "broken," "shattered," and "crucified" when confronted by the unfailing love of God. In this connection Niebuhr writes:

The self is shattered whenever it is confronted by the power and holiness of God and becomes genuinely conscious of the real source and centre of all life. In Christian faith Christ mediates the confrontation of the self by God; for it is in Christ that the vague sense of the divine, which human life never loses, is crystallized into a revelation of a divine mercy and judgment.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, II, 109. Used by permission of the publisher.

Confession of sin is certainly a part of any religious self-analysis, and a necessary step in the direction of reconciliation. It is significant that Franz Alexander and Thomas M. French, in their book, *Psychoanalytic Therapy*, have described "confession" as a common dynamic mechanism in every therapy; and they cite research which relates the inability to confess to a mother, or a mother-substitute, and the inability to overcome feelings of estrangement with the later appearance of psychogenic asthma attacks. Confession is commonplace in most religions, and though its form and content may vary, its broad function is two-fold: purification, or catharsis, and reconciliation. In this connection, Professor Schneider has commented on the tendency of "civilized" religions to avoid confession of specific sins by confessing sinfulness in general; and this, he insists, moves away from the original health-giving function of confession, making it inevitable that secular "confessions" arise. He adds significantly: "When religious institutions administer opiates, secular institutions must attend to genuine cures."<sup>2</sup>

While some elements of modern Protestantism have abandoned confession as a specific service of the Church and have tended to substitute "general confessions" for individual confession, the whole movement of theology in recent years has been to deal more realistically with the fact of sin. Catholic Christianity has never abandoned the confessional, but neither has it made adjustments in the procedure of that sacramental act which might provide a more profound searching. Even so, the retention of this sacrament in Catholic communities may be counted as evidence of residual health. Paul Tillich has noted that in the predominantly Protestant cultures where the sacraments have tended to lose power, "psychoanalysis has seemed more desirable for educated people than religion."<sup>3</sup> This state-

<sup>2</sup> H. W. Schneider, "Review of *Le Confessione dei peccati* (Vol. III) by Raffaele Pettazzone," *Review of Religion*, I, 1, 50.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 288.

ment sharpens the focus on Professor Schneider's remark. When civilized religions come to ignore the need of every man to find not only an "understanding" of his sin but also forgiveness and restoration in quite specific terms, they can expect secular institutions to take over their work. But the tragedy is deepened in that modern man finds no forgiveness there. The psychotherapist will invite him to understand and to accept himself within the privileged sanctuary of the therapeutic relation. But his deepest separation remains unbridged, apart from confession of sin and God's forgiving action. We would emphasize that what Harry Stack Sullivan's statement about therapy applies equally well to the specific nature of confession: ". . . one has information about one's experience only to the extent that one has tended to communicate it to another—or thought about it in the manner of communicative speech."<sup>4</sup>

Christian experience has signalized in repentance and conversion the crucial moment for turning away from the rigidly striving self to a relaxed trust in God. Conversion may be a dramatic moment, but for the vast majority of Christians it is a series of *returnings* and *rests*, where "quietness and confidence" is the ultimate outcome. A common element in every conversion is that experience of giving up the pride-infested false self for the genuine self as grounded in God. Conversion is a returning movement of the creature to the Creator. It was thus to Brother Lawrence, who attributed his conversion to the sight of a bare tree in winter time and to the reflection that underneath its winter barrenness God preserved a power within, that in the spring would clothe it anew with leaves and blossoms. In conversion man grasps the underlying unity of creation that has been hidden from him in his isolation. Even the barren things of life take on new significance for him in the light of God's unfailing care.

<sup>4</sup> H. S. Sullivan, *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry* (New York: The William Alanson White Foundation, 1946), p. 91.

Fundamentally, self-searching and confession prepare the way for the response of faith—a faith already present in the willingness to search. It must be emphasized that Christian faith requires voluntary self-surrender rather than submission. The term “self-surrender” is used here in the sense of self-release, or letting go, in the conviction that God’s love undergirds all things. Submission would make faith in God another tyranny, while self-surrender opens the way for free and spontaneous meeting with God and with one’s neighbor. The experience of abandonment in conversion does, indeed, bring into sharp contrast the power of God and the helplessness of man. In his study of religious experience, William James emphasized this factor:

There are only two ways in which it is possible to get rid of anger, worry, fear, despair, or other undesirable affections. One is that an opposite affection would break over us, and the other is by getting so exhausted with the struggle that we have to stop—so we drop down, give up and don’t care any longer.<sup>5</sup>

But self-surrender in the Christian sense follows the pattern set by Christ, who poured out His life in joyful self-surrender. Christian faith looks “unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross . . .” (Hebrews 12:2, AV). In the Christian view of surrender the emphasis is upon the freely acting self, although the action is unconscious, as well as conscious. It is the total self, and not the mind alone, that turns to God in faith. Conversion signals a shift in the personality of the individual from calculated and anxiety-ridden efforts to *prove his worth* to its opposite, the relaxed knowledge of his worth before God. The old self is given up

<sup>5</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (The Modern Library), p. 208. Used by permission of Paul R. Reynolds & Son, 599 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

("crucified"), and the "new being" is released from the slavery of sin.

Self-examination, therefore, moves through the facing of the self in confession, repentance, and self-surrender toward the experience of reconciliation. It is no mere brief cry to God for help, no momentary glance in the direction of God—but a profound change. It means the breaking up of one's fallow ground and a long cultivation of self-knowledge, culminating in a return to God. The therapeutic significance of surrender in treatment and its close analogy to religious conversion has been observed by Dr. Harry Tiebout in his work with alcoholics. He has noted that, in treatment, the patient undergoes a surrender experience that marks an unconscious turn to a positive attitude in which tenseness, hostility, and isolation are replaced by a relaxed and realistic orientation in the world. Dr. Tiebout writes:

The phenomenon of release which makes people realize that in losing their lives they are finding them, becomes explicable if one sees that the surrender which precedes the sense of release stills the inner flight and hostility, thus permitting the spontaneous creative elements of the inner self outlets for expression.”<sup>6</sup>

#### ACCEPTANCE

In coming to know the self, the Christian learns that he is known from beyond himself. In yielding his old self, he discovers the love of God as the ground of his new self. The New Testament uses the word *agape* to describe the love of God, which, in contrast to *eros*, emphasizes the creative and freely bestowed love in which the sinner is renewed. The great moments of faith are those in which one comes to the realization that he is known and sustained from beyond himself.

<sup>6</sup> Harry M. Tiebout, "The Act of Surrender in the Therapeutic Process," paper read before Columbia University Religion and Health Seminar, New York, October, 1947, 8 pp. (mimeographed).

Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine uprising;  
thou understandest my thoughts long before (Psalm  
139:1).

Man comes to God as sinner. He is accepted in love. That is the gift of salvation. The pain of self-searching and the struggle to remove the barriers of sin are always met by God. Salvation begins here in the fact that God seeks man first. This is the glad Good News of Christ. One thing man must do: He must accept the gift—accept acceptance! For in this he is already restored to *at-oneness* with himself and with his world. In Christian faith, as in therapy, the experience of being *accepted* is the beginning of the cure. *Agape*, the love of God that seeks and finds the anxiety-driven sinner even before he finds himself, is the necessary condition for the relaxation of that anxiety and for the open, receptive attitude of faith. Love and acceptance are the daily bread of renewing life. St. Bernard of Clairvaux reminded the rationally minded medieval philosophers that God is known through the affections, not through the intellect, and that it is through love that we come to trust Him, rather than in learning. Relationship to God is more than a postulate in theology. It is the work of Christian faith in every age to remind a world, conscious of its anxiety and either too frightened or too proud to reach out beyond itself, that God's love is the condition of man's being; hence also, the condition of man's knowing himself. Hear the prayer of St. Augustine, as he stood between two uncertain worlds:

Our Father, who has exhorted us to pray, who also bringest about what thou hast asked of us; since we live better when we pray to thee and are better: hear me as I tremble in this darkness and reach out thy right hand to me. Hold thy light before me and recall me from my strayings, that with thee as my guide I may return to myself and to thee.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> St. Augustine, *Soliloquies*. II. v. 19 in *An Augustine Synthesis*. p. 19.

Christian faith holds that ultimately man cannot save himself, that tragic anxiety and his sin drive him further away from the awareness of the real source of his self-division, his unwillingness to resolve the unavoidable anxiety of existence in faith. It is true that the experience of acceptance in interpersonal therapy fosters a greater degree of health and that the whole process of psychoanalysis may bring the individual into greater communication with wider areas of the personality; but unless analysis is fulfilled by something of the cosmic healing known in the experience of salvation, it remains fragmentary, and is threatened by its very limited character. Man is not merely confused and plagued by ambivalent motives. He is broken and isolated to the very core of his being, and his self-division extends to a split with his world and with the ground of his existence. Here, not only healing but redemption is necessary. The primal anxieties of man's existence have cut too deep to be covered over by man alone. In the Christian view the self must be delivered from beyond itself.

It has been pointed out many times that the self in "faith" may be possessed by something less than the redemptive love of God. Modern psychology has demonstrated emphatically that some forms of religion encourage authoritarian patterns of behavior and undermine the self-strength of the individual. Indeed, this is always the temptation of a popular religion. It replaces a vital and dynamic relation to God with a set of rules and a privileged class to enforce them. It is a false religion and a vain worship, because it rests upon the abolition of man; that is, upon the abolition of his freedom and his selfhood. In the Christian view man's relation to God is based upon voluntary action as an expression of his unique selfhood. What purpose could freedom serve in the God-created man, if the final meaning of his life required the giving up of that freedom, and with it the surrender of his distinctive being? Biblical religion knows a great deal about such false worships, and it has raised a prophetic voice in every generation to witness

against those that use religion as a means to control others,  
those who

. . . bind heavy burdens  
and grievous to be borne,  
and lay them on men's shoulders;  
but they themselves will not move them  
with one of their fingers (Matt. 23:4, AV).

Indeed, one might say that a recurring theme in the Hebrew-Christian covenant-religion is the prophetic protest against the people who, as the carriers of the faith, try to possess it for themselves. The prophets were stoned and Christ was crucified, when they threatened the authority of those that used religion as a means of enforcing the sinful pretension of priests and kings. That prophetic spirit that searches the heart, as well as the behavior, is still the most revolutionary force in our civilization. In the light of that flood-beam, the motives of every advocate of the *status quo*—whether person or institution—shall be exposed. Christian faith and freedom cannot be shackled to the proud imaginings of man.

Jesus as the Christ is for the Christian the ultimate redeeming symbol. Here, in personal terms, man's struggle encounters the love of God. As the Christ, God became a person and through Him man's sin and separation were healed. Here man is restored to himself and to God. It is within the *agape* of God alone that this restoration is possible. Thus, the love of God is both the reason for our existence and the ultimate means of our self-realization. In the person of Christ this love seeks to restore man to that true selfhood which is in relation to God. *Agape* is a freely bestowed gift. It cannot be earned. It can only be accepted.

The first Christians preached the simple Gospel that Christ died for our sins and was raised up for our justification. In Him at-one-ment is accomplished. The cross is the measure of man's sin and of the unfailing love of God.

Those first Christians felt the surge of a new life in Christ, a new life in which the power of sin and anxiety had been broken. This, they insisted, was no "cunningly devised fable," but a reality in their lives. Nor did they gloss over the cost on Calvary or the desperate struggle that every convert must wage with sin. In Calvin's terms they sought their peace "only in the terrors of Christ," their Redeemer, having found in Him the strong love of God to persevere. Thus the outreach of God in Christ meets and accepts the sinner in his search for deliverance from the tyranny of the anxiety that is characteristic of his contradictory existence.

#### THREE ASPECTS OF JUSTIFICATION

The word *justification* today implies, in popular use, vindication, but the biblical use of this word refers more to right relations with man or with God. St. Paul sets forth the Christian view of justification in the first chapters of Romans, where he holds that, apart from a right relation to God, the Jew in his Law or the Greek in his ethics can experience *only* the wrath of God. Apart from that vital relation to God, man's efforts shuttle between anxiety and pride. The result is an anger-filled people whose bent is destruction. The apostle insists that God alone, in Christ, can close the gap between man's futility in trying to save himself in proud isolation and the acceptance of himself in faith. In a few succinct words St. Paul gives his explanation of justification:

. . . since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith (Romans 3:23-25).

Man's recovered right relation with God is the work of Christ. It is, in the deepest sense, the recovery of man himself. But it is a gift from God that must be received in

faith. He who busily engages in works to prove his worth has already rendered himself unable to receive that most precious gift.

The problem of self-worth and the manner in which man has tried to secure it, stand behind many of the anxiety manifestations in this culture. Perhaps the following account of a pastoral counseling experience will serve to make more explicit the meaning of justification, as that term is used in Christianity.

This pastoral counseling relation lasted over a period of two years, during which the counselee moved from a withdrawn, self-divided state toward a wider participation by choice in her own community life. Mrs. Blank was first seen in a general hospital where she was being treated after a miscarriage. Her father had suggested the call to the counselor, explaining that she had "turned her face to the wall." This was taken to mean that she had lost interest in living. There had been several miscarriages and a growing sense of futility in Mrs. Blank's life that was clearly noticeable to those that lived close to her. She was a woman in her late thirties, married, the mother of two physically healthy children. Her husband was shy and rather withdrawn. It was learned later that Mrs. Blank and her family had lived apart from her parents for a number of years, but recently had been forced to return home for reasons of economy.

The hospital call with Mrs. Blank was brief and uneventful, but it provided the basis for a continuing relationship that eventually resulted in her request for pastoral help some months later.

When Mrs. Blank finally came for assistance, she explained that she had delayed this action because she had long doubted that there could be any help for her. Mrs. Blank presented a picture of strange contradictions: she had been an active woman, who had always "taken charge of things" and managed her own life; but now she seemed

withdrawn and defeated. She thought of herself as a "Christian," concerned for others, but at the same time she felt deep resentment when any claims were made on her. At one point she remembered with much negative feeling that, as a child, she had felt threatened when her parents had added to an already large family by taking in orphaned children. Finally, she felt angry and exhausted that, despite all her busy activity, she "got nowhere." This was expressed in a dream in which she was on a merry-go-round that always stopped where it had started.

The counselor observed a gradual change in Mrs. Blank during the following months. Her withdrawal and her "helplessness" had become the final unconscious strategies by which she purchased the concern of others. Within the *givenness* of the pastoral counseling relation, she moved out into more responsible relations with herself and others. Behind her feeling of impoverishment was the deeply buried conviction that she was valuable only insofar as she could "possess" value, "perform," or "be useful" to others. During this early period, one of her dreams was about a diminutive person trying to turn over the page of a huge, gilded Bible. Gradually, Mrs. Blank came to face the contradiction to her faith involved in her constant effort to ground her value in something she could do or possess, rather than in herself as a child of God. Her concern now became the question, "What is the meaning of my relationships?" It was not without much vacillation between a desperate use of helplessness and a painful awareness of lost living that she began to move out again into satisfying relations with others. At this point she dreamed of passing through a narrow passage and of crossing a stream, and her concern became more and more "How can I express myself through my life, my family, my Church?" Faith had meaning now, not as a heavy, gilded book the pages of which she tried hard to turn, but as a response to a God-given relation that sought expression. Several months after this experience she described her feel-

ings as moving in the direction of "the capacity to give and to receive love without guilt feelings, to be free from anxiety and dependence." For her, these benefits flowed from the growing realization that preceding anything she did was a relationship to God, made right in Christ and made her own in faith.

Guilt, anxiety, and loneliness are the realities of man's life in sin and separation. It is in the faith of the Christian that God has acted and continues to act in His Holy Spirit and through His faithful people mightily to remedy this devastation of man. Grace begins even before man looks for help. God cares. But every Christian must be reminded that the reality of despair cannot be evaded. The Gospel of Christ is nonsense to one that is unwilling to face his own involvement in guilt and "dead-end" living. The Gospel is Good News only to those that are willing to share its death and resurrection. It was in this sense that Kierkegaard could write, "He who with respect to guilt is educated by dread will therefore repose only in atonement."<sup>8</sup>

#### **FORGIVENESS**

The word *justification* in the Greek Bible may also be translated as *righteousness*. It refers to an experience whereby one is brought into right relations with another person. There is profound wisdom in the biblical insistence that the heart of righteousness is relationship, not ethical achievement. Thus the ultimate command that comes as a climax in the Sermon on the Mount is to "seek first his (*i.e.*, your heavenly Father's) kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well (Matthew 6:33). Let us note that "these things," which include the whole range of Christian virtues, both the longing for perfection and the deliverance from anxiety, are not to be sought alone. They are given to him that seeks first a faithful relation to God

<sup>8</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Dread* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 145.

in Christ. The current revival of interest in ethics is likely to produce little but deeper despair over our unrighteousness, unless it results in the re-creative meeting of God and man in faith. Righteousness is the fruit of the faith community. It will be sought in vain when sought apart from that community.

Forgiveness is the reality of man's restored relation to God. We shall do well to remember that the verb *to give* is at the heart of forgiveness. Since it is man's sin that has broken the unity of God's created world, forgiveness requires action on the part of God. This is the theme of much of the Bible. Burrows enumerated a few of the ways in which the Bible describes God's dealing with man's sins: ". . . he heals them, removes them or puts them far away, puts them behind his back, conceals or covers them, lifts or takes them away, wipes them away or blots them out."<sup>\*</sup>

But forgiveness of sin is not a simple divine fiat. It is a deeply personal experience, not a legal manipulation; and it takes place in a manner that expresses the reality of sin and its character in man's life as utterly opposite to the reality of God's forgiving love. Here the historical realism of the picture of Christ in the New Testament is crucial. The event of Christ is of the stuff of history, and every forgiven sinner *lives into* that story by faith. This is no sentimental dream nor mystic's ecstatic vision. It happened in history; and the dust of Palestine, the sweat and grime of men's faces, the pain, the blood, and the exultant joy of it are attested by witnesses whose faith has touched the faith that touches ours.

The "new man" of God's forgiveness still belongs to the world of sin and its consequences, but the power of sin to rob him of ultimate hope has been removed. Forgiveness is the good news of the Gospel, a message "wholly other" to the world's accounting of credit and debt, and yet miracu-

\* Miller Burrows, *An Outline of Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), p. 178.

lously adequate to heal the disease that plagues man. It heals and restores in a way that is not unlike man's experience of forgiveness in an interpersonal relation, but it does so in a deeper and more permanently satisfying sense. Forgiveness restores genuine worth beyond alienation in recovered wholeness at every level of man's being. Thus restored, man participates in God's reconciling action within the community of those who forgive, as they have been forgiven. In forgiveness the "new man" is born of God's love.

In western Christendom the experience of Martin Luther has profoundly influenced the handling of sin and anxiety in relation to forgiveness. Driven by an overwhelming anxiety to find his own peace in zealous works, he discovered that his activity only heightened his desperation until, in reading St. Paul again, he rediscovered the Gospel of God's forgiving love. Here he found health and salvation anew, release from sin and tormenting conscience. The words of Christ rang with great clarity and moment for his despairing soul, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." And Luther comforted himself with the immediate significance of these words: ". . . look not upon them in thyself, but remember that they are translated and laid upon Christ, whose stripes have made thee whole."<sup>10</sup>

## FAITH

Quieted thus in the depths of his soul, a man may accept himself as grounded in and cared for by God, an attitude that we recognize as the opposite of sin. Faith is this confidence, inspired by Christ, that makes it possible for a man to forget himself in spontaneous and loving relations with his fellows. Faith in Christ is the acceptance of oneself in the knowledge that God has already accepted him in the sacrifice of Christ. Indeed, that sacrifice manifests the eternal nature of God. The agony of Calvary and its triumph

<sup>10</sup> Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians* (James Duncan, 1830), p. 109.

beyond tragedy reveal that genuine selfhood is possible,<sup>1</sup> though painful, in unbroken and loving communion between God and man. Faith does not mean that one is merely "adjusted," or that all of life's tensions are removed. It is an attitude of the whole personality that reflects confidence and peace, rather than anxiety and sin.<sup>2</sup>

The vicious cycle of anxiety, hostility, and guilt is broken by faith and healed in love. Faith—*pistis* to the early Christians—is that decisive response to the love of God, poured out in Christ, which makes it possible for one to turn from oppressive anxiety to an attitude of trust in the relationship *made right* by God. In her anxiety to "justify" herself, Mrs. Blank was constantly engaged in the effort to "prove her worth." But as she came to accept acceptance in faith, her busy activity lost its driving incentive. Her concern became one of expressing gratitude for the "new being" that she had come to be in faith.

In the light of modern psychology's understanding of anxiety, Luther's emphasis on faith rather than works takes on new significance. As we have seen, anxiety relentlessly drives man on in his effort to find justification for himself. But peace does not come, as long as anxiety underlies his actions. It comes only as a complete shift of the whole personality from anxiety to faith issues in "quietness and confidence." Luther insisted that it is not many good works, but faith which "redeems, corrects, and preserves our conscience." That his target was the vacillating pride and anxiety behind busy activity, and not good works themselves, is clear in his *Treatise on Christian Liberty*, where he explains that faith does not free one from good works, but from false opinions concerning them. He added elsewhere:

Where there is no faith, there everyone presumptuously undertakes to better himself by means of works and to make himself well-pleasing to God. When this

happens, false security and presumption arise therefrom, as though man were well-pleasing to God because of his own works. When this does not happen, the conscience has no rest and knows not what to do, that it may become well-pleasing to God.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, for Luther, faith brings healing to the anxious soul in a way that no amount of good works could. In view of the soundness of Luther's emphasis at this point, it is rather surprising to find Fromm characterizing Luther's concept of faith as a "compulsive quest for certainty." Fromm holds that, psychologically, faith may be of two entirely different varieties: "It can be the expression of an inner relatedness to mankind and affirmation of life; or it can be a reaction formation against a fundamental feeling of doubt, rooted in the isolation of the individual . . ." <sup>12</sup> Fromm has decided that Luther's faith falls in the latter category and that it delivered people, after the Reformation, into submission to the tyrannical authority of a God primarily concerned with subduing the individual self.

It certainly must be admitted that doubt and uncertainty played a role in the theological development of Luther and the reformers. In this they truly expressed their age. Their minds laid bare the turmoil and agony of a people whose inner disturbance and self-division was indicated by the intensity of the Reformation break. But Luther's concept of faith stood against the other activist consequences of this inner turmoil. A "fundamental feeling of doubt, rooted in the isolation of the individual" is an accurate description of the motivating force behind busy works. In Luther's view, "works" included all the things an anxiety-ridden person may do to prove his worth—from "good deeds" to frequent confession (which Luther seemed to suspect of having obsessional dangers). Indeed, what

<sup>11</sup> Martin Luther, *Works* (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Co. and Castle Press, 1915), I, 308.

<sup>12</sup> Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, p. 78.

Fromm does not seem to be willing to admit is that existence always involves shock and the threat of isolation to free, but finite, man; and that Luther's faith made it possible for him to live with these uncertainties. It would seem that Fromm's judgment that Luther's faith was a "reaction formation" would have been more relevant if, instead of faith, Luther had sought salvation through busy, compulsive works. The reformer was delivered from sin and torment of conscience only to the extent that he was able to accept the gift of Christ in faith: "Grace releaseth sin, and peace maketh the conscience quiet. The two fiends that torment us are sin and conscience."<sup>13</sup>

In faith, the Christian participates in the healing power that is rooted in the realm of the divine. By faith he knows the joy of a new creation and a "new being." In this moment the power of anxiety is broken, and man's ability to love is restored. Such is the testimony of the New Testament and of religious experience throughout the ages. Faith opens the way for love. It removes the mountain which separates man from God.

#### NURTURE

Love is the fruit of faith. In loving self-relations and in interpersonal relations, it is possible for selfhood to mature in faith. Both the experience of justification in faith, and sanctification in love and communion are required to heal sin and anxiety in man's soul. Luther's zeal to remove trust in "works" has resulted in an overwhelming emphasis in Protestantism upon the act of justification by faith, to the neglect of the continuing "returning and rest" in the faith and holy fellowship that Catholic Christianity has striven to maintain. It is important to keep in mind that there is more to God's grace than forgiveness of sins. There is also that renewing strength and "daily increase" of God's Holy Spirit, which the prayer of Confirmation so well expresses.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians*, p. 12.

The full work of reconciliation is accomplished within the area of the holy fellowship where men accept forgiveness in faith and live within the relationship described by Christian symbols. The Church is the place where the Christian experience is possible. With St. Augustine we add that the Christian experience is not the exclusive possession of the visible Church. It belongs to all the citizens of that holy city of God who love Him above all things. But the Church in the world remains as a reminder that God's love calls us into community and restores us to the loving nurture of one another intended in the beginning. Man was made for communion, not for solitude. Creation is fulfilled when community becomes holy fellowship.

What does it mean to experience justification and reconciliation with God? We have held, first of all, that it means a restored relationship, made right by God's action, within which one can accept acceptance and forgiveness through the response of faith. It means not only release and separation from the prison house of sin, but also entrance upon a new life characterized more by faith than by anxiety. It is a new beginning; but it is only a beginning. It must be nurtured in love and strengthened by growth in the Christian fellowship. Unfortunately, there are many "Christians" whose feverish anxiety about the state and degree of their justification betrays an anxiety-ridden self, a self whose faith conforms more to Fromm's definition of a "reaction formation." These Christians use the phrases "justification" and "salvation," but at heart one feels that they have not heard or have been unable to accept God's message of forgiveness and reconciliation. For here there is a source of moral spontaneity that makes it unnecessary to be anxious about one's spiritual security. Many a Christian, like the Psalmist whose faith was shaken when he compared his lot to the "prosperity of the wicked," flees into self-pity whenever the real motive of his "faith" is exposed:

Then have I cleansed my heart in vain,  
and washed my hands in innocence (Psalm 73:13).

And like the Psalmist, such Christians will not rediscover the meaning of their faith until they go again to "the sanctuary of God," where, although "flesh and heart" fail, God is their "strength and portion for ever."

The question remains: Is justification the whole picture? What of that growth in holiness that the Church has called sanctification? Does one grow in grace toward sanctification, or in view of the fact that sin and anxiety are so persistent in human existence, is talk about sanctification a dangerous illusion? This has remained a serious problem for the Christian Church. In terms of anxiety, the question resolves itself into one of whether, by the help of grace and the sacraments of the Church, anxiety and sin may be progressively reduced, or whether the task of justification is present at every moment for the individual. The Catholic view has held that justification restores man to God and turns the soul from self-love to love of God, whereupon it may grow in grace. But the Catholic view has concerned itself more and more with the process of sanctification and the means to it, so that the need for justification at every moment has been subordinated or has disappeared. Behind the Catholic view is its concept of the fall as only a loss in degree of original perfection, and it holds that the crucial matter is grace, which restores and completes imperfect nature. Thus in the words of Moberly, the Anglo-Catholic writer, "There is no ultimate distinction between 'to justify' and 'to make righteous'; between a man's being pronounced righteous by the truth of God and being, in the truth of God, righteous."<sup>14</sup>

The Reformation, on the other hand, being acutely conscious of man's sin and of the infinite variety of ways in which he escapes the confrontation of himself in sin, dis-

<sup>14</sup> Robert C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality* (London: Longmans, Green, 1902), p. 885.

tinguished sharply between justification and sanctification, tending to emphasize the former. As a result, a large section of Protestantism has tended to neglect the specific nurture, locus, and renewal of the Christian life, signified in the concept of sanctification. The Reformers emphasized the danger of self-righteous pride in the Catholic view, which held that one could, by the help of priestly and sacramental grace, meet the divine confrontation of his life with an easy conscience. Fundamentally, they questioned whether the power of inordinate self-love is broken in justification. Sin remains to infect man's every effort to realize the fruits of his faith in love, a fact that prompted a modern skeptical philosopher to ask if the final truth of the Christian Gospel is "the persistence of sin in the lives of the redeemed."<sup>15</sup> While accepting the fact of the persistence of sin in those that have experienced justification, it is our view that reconciliation breaks the power of primal anxiety and sets man on the threshold of a new life in love. The redeemed may lose faith—anxiety and sin remaining a problem—but since he has known the joy of untrammeled love, if only for a moment, that memory will not let him forget the direction of his salvation. Eucharist—genuine thanksgiving—has entered his life. We hold further that the Church, as the holy fellowship, provides both the locus and the means of the strengthening and unfolding of the genuine selfhood discovered in reconciliation. While it is true that the Church is actually made up of anxious and sinful people, its loyalty to the Gospel is measured by its confession of this fact and by its continued efforts to realize in its corporate life the significance of the redeeming love of God. The good news of the Gospel is that Christ has made possible a new life, in which anxiety is broken in faith and resolved in love. That life is manifest in the Church, where faith works through love.

<sup>15</sup> John H. Randall, "A Review of *The Nature and Destiny of Man* by Reinhold Niebuhr," *Union Review*, IV, 2, 22.

#### A NEW CREATURE

It will be recalled that, in our discussion of man as sinner in the last chapter, we came to the conclusion that self-hatred, rooted in the paradox of pride and anxiety, is the basic attitude of sinful man. The ultimate sin is that man refuses to accept himself as grounded in God. In anxiety he despises himself because he cannot save himself. Now faith has been defined as the opposite condition, the state wherein man accepts himself as redeemed by God. What, therefore, is the consequent basic attitude of man in reconciliation? In the New Testament it is a reflection of the freely given love of God—*agape*. St. Paul in that famous Corinthian passage sketched the meaning of *agape*: . . . Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (I Cor. 13:17).

In *agape* all laws are transcended, all contradictions resolved in the outgoing and uncalculating love of God. It establishes a new covenant, written not in laws but in the hearts of men, and known in terms of healing salvation. Christian faith has held that man is regenerated from within, and that he encounters God in the depths of his own soul. The starting point, therefore, of the Christian attitude toward the self is in the attitude of God toward man: His acceptance and love.

It is common knowledge in psychiatric work today that a child's capacity to love depends upon the amount of genuine love that he has experienced in the family relation. The child of a permissive and loving mother is much more likely to relate himself in a positive way to others than one whose mother is basically forbidding and rejecting. The Christian Gospel has asserted this truth by emphasizing the freely given divine love and man's capacity to love in the knowledge that God has first loved him. This is the *saving grace* which the New Testament proclaimed; but it must be emphasized that it is based upon love as *agape*, in which

both the loving and the loved are caught up in a transcending experience of unity, unqualified by the use of love for control or submission. This point is stated in rebuttal of the notion, held in some psychiatric circles, that Christian love is used in a way similar to the neurotic mother's control of her child by the formula, "I have loved you, now you must obey me!" It is true, of course, that the Christian symbols may be put to such neurotic uses, but in these cases the "love" employed is something less than the love of God manifested in Christ; and it is the "love" of one whose need to dominate reflects a significant unfamiliarity with the "peace of God which passeth all understanding."

In coming to the Christian experience, man is taught to love God with his whole heart and to love his neighbor as himself. Christian opinion is divided as to whether self-love is implied in this summary. St. Augustine, for instance, held that it implies three things that man should love: God, himself, and his neighbor; and thus "he who loves God offends not in loving himself . . ." <sup>16</sup> On the other hand, Protestant thought, because of its consciousness that sin always infects the love of self (even as a part of the love of God and neighbor), has consequently avoided the term and has tended to consider self-love as the primary sin. Reinhold Niebuhr has indicated, in personal conversation, that he would reject the concept of self-love as a true Christian concept. In his review of Fromm's book, *Man for Himself*, in which Fromm sets forth his principle of genuine self-love, Niebuhr writes:

An insecure and impoverished self is not made secure by the admonition to be concerned for itself; for an excessive concern for its security is the cause of its impoverishment.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Przywara, *An Augustine Synthesis*, p. 851.

<sup>17</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, "Review of *Man for Himself* by Erich Fromm," *Christianity and Society*, XIII, 2, 26-28.

Perhaps one of the difficulties in the use of the term *self-love* is that it brings to mind this unhealthy self-concern to which Professor Niebuhr refers; for, to be sure, anxious self-centeredness is at the base of man's problem as a sinner. But, on the other hand, self-love in the sense of acceptance of one's own being as grounded in and cared for by God is not excessive self-concern. Indeed, it is a genuine basis of overcoming the primal anxiety that drives man into sin. It is, furthermore, a reflection of the love of God, which in human relations can free man from the anxiety that holds him a slave to selfishness. For the Christian, only the strong love of God, and thus of neighbor and of self, is able to shatter the chains that bind man to his self-contradictory ways. It is in this light that Professor Niebuhr adds to his comment on the impoverished self:

Nor is it made secure by the admonition to love others because of its anxiety about itself. That is why a profound religion has always insisted that the self cannot be cured by law, but only by grace; and also why the profoundest forms of the Christian faith regard this preoccupation as not fully curable and therefore as requiring another kind of grace: that of forgiveness.<sup>18</sup>

It remains, then, that self-love, in the sense of respect for the self as redeemed by God, follows naturally upon the love of God and of neighbor.

The new creature of Christian faith has encountered the love and forgiveness that bring health in and beyond the limits of his own self-realization. In discovering himself, man discovers God at the very heart of the universe. He also finds spontaneous community with others who, like himself, belong in Christ's kingdom. And the *new* thing about a Christian man is his faith and love, wherein brokenness is healed and freedom and selfhood are fulfilled in the

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

worship of Him, whose service is perfect freedom. That fulfillment is the answer to St. Paul's prayer in Ephesians:

May you be filled with all the completion God has to give (Ephesians 4:18, Knox).

#### THE SYMBOLS OF RECONCILIATION

We have held throughout this study that the specific locus of the Christian experience is in Christian community. Here, in company with "a great cloud of witnesses," man's faith is nurtured, and the wounds of anxiety healed. Man's deepest hurt is always suffered in loneliness. His cure must take place in community. Even the psychiatrist must heal through the establishment of an accepting community with his patient. But, beyond the consulting room, the patient looks in vain for such a community in contemporary culture.

The Church holds out the promise of an accepting community, although it must be frankly admitted that too often its promise is not fulfilled. The anxiety-ridden ways of this world receive simply a pious cloak in many congregations. Where there is promise, however, there is the possibility of fulfillment. The renewal of the Church in our "crowd culture" offers the prospect of restored community.

It is in the sacraments that the Church comes to grips, in specific terms, with the needs of man in anxiety and sin. Here the Church employs the intrinsic powers of nature, as well as some of the basic activities of man's life, as curative agents. The sacraments involve the participation of the whole self in worshipful acts which, by re-enacting a specific aspect of the drama of redemption, impart spiritual gifts to the participant. Goethe once said that the highest cannot be spoken, it can only be acted. Thus the sacraments are holy acts and symbols, which become the bearers of God's grace to man.

Holy Baptism evolved in the Church as the sacrament of initiation into the Christian community. Like Holy Com-

munion, it was specifically directed by Christ Himself. In the early Church, it marked the incorporation of the convert into the Church, and was usually accompanied by the laying on of hands, an act that signified both the confirmation of the faith of the initiate and the bestowal of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In Holy Baptism, cleansing from sin and restoration to unity with God, are symbolized by the water and by the acceptance into the "congregation of Christ's flock." Baptism marks the death of the *old self* with its tragic anxiety and separation, and the birth of the *new self* in touch with the holy fellowship. The full fruit of baptism, that is, acceptance of one's self as "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven" must be brought to maturity within that holy fellowship. Members of a congregation will do well to remember that they *start* more than they *finish* in a baptismal service. Its completion depends upon the kind of experience that the child will know among the members of Christ's flock. For although nothing can change the fact that God has claimed His own in the baptism, the meaning of that fact will be interpreted by experience.

Baptism was, to the early Christians, the seal of an inward change and the means of grace; but that it was not a guarantee against further sin is attested by the great concern with post-baptismal sin. The fact that faith restores man to unity with God and that the holy fellowship offers him an opportunity to find health for his divided self in loving communion does not mean that his primal anxiety is automatically resolved. Much prayer and fasting, as well as much soul searching, is required of those who would win the battle of sin and anxiety in their own hearts. Like the Kingdom of God, the *new self is beginning to come in the visible sacrament*; to further its growth, man must cooperate. In view of this persistence of sin and the need for continual returning to God, the Church has developed the Sacrament of Penance. From ancient times the

therapy of confession and absolution has been practiced within Christendom.

It is not our purpose here to outline the history of the Sacrament of Penance, except to indicate briefly the fact that in penance and pastoral care the Church has dealt with the same problems that are presented in psychotherapy today. The early Christians were acutely conscious of the fact that sin excludes the individual from active participation in the common life of the Church. Hatred between Christian brothers had to be reconciled before their gifts were acceptable at the altar. Confession of sin before the whole congregation and restitution for offenses committed were required, from earliest times, in order to be received again into the full fellowship and to obtain the assurance of God's mercy. As time went on, public confession was supplemented by secret confession, in which the priest played a greater role. But in both cases, penance was the means by which the "lost life" of the Christian was restored. Even though the penitential system of Christendom has become rigid and authoritarian in some aspects, it represents basically the creative and health-giving character of Christian faith in practice. McNeill has written concerning *The Penitentials*, which embodied the confessional practice of the medieval period:

The penitentials offer to the sinner the means of rehabilitation. He is given guidance to the way of recovering harmonious relations with the Church, society, and God. Freed in the process of penance from social censure, he recovers the lost personal values of which his offenses have deprived him. He can once more function as a normal person.<sup>18</sup>

Origen recommended the seeking out of "skilled and merciful physicians" who know the "discipline of comfort

<sup>18</sup> John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), p. 46. Used by permission of the publisher.

and sympathy." Such a description is a fair definition of the pastoral-care responsibility of the priest that developed along with the penitential system of the Church. Those that were not comforted by the open and direct acknowledgement of sin in the congregation must have required more and more attention from the priests that were skilled in this field. The medieval penitentials, though limited from our point of view, represent the growing effort of the Church to develop a "discipline of comfort and sympathy" for those in need of pastoral guidance.

The value of auricular confession is a subject of some controversy within Christendom. Where it has become perfunctory, where it is a brief and formal recitation of carefully selected sins, its genuinely health-giving qualities are questionable. Jung has reminded us that "nature is not lenient with unconscious sinners"; and the sin behind sins is apt to remain unconscious in very brief and formal confessions. On the other hand, we have already discussed the dangers involved in "general confessions." The Anglican Church has retained a place for private confession as well as for public; and the specific situations in which the former is mentioned in the Book of Common Prayer (namely, in The Exhortations and in The Communion of the Sick) are more than likely to require that the priest serve as both confessor and counselor. This relationship should serve to strengthen and sharpen both functions of the priest. It would seem that a church that keeps open the possibility of person to person confession and absolution will, on the whole, in its life and sacraments, maintain closer contact with the real needs of the people and keep its message of salvation firmly grounded in human experience. I note that Tillich attributes the spread of psychoanalysis in Protestant countries not only to the "rigorous moralism" that developed when the sacraments were taken away, but also to "the solitude of the deciding individual, who has to bear responsibility and guilt without the help of confession and

the related forgiveness which comes from the outside.”<sup>20</sup>

Since we are primarily interested in the role of Christian symbols in meeting anxiety today, we must conclude this discussion of reconciliation with a brief survey of the pastoral function of the priest. It will be recalled that, in our introductory chapter, we noted that the practical result of Cartesian dualism has been to divide man into body and spirit. Such a division has played its part in limiting the pastoral function of the priest to the strictly “spiritual” aspects of man’s life. But the ministry of reconciliation breaks over such artificial barriers, and in every age men turn to the priest for help and counsel. With the renewal of the concept of wholeness in modern views of health, it is to be expected that pastoral care will become more and more important in helping man find the deepest satisfactions of health.

The impact of recent psychology upon theological teaching and training is still in the period of exploration, but already there are indications that the function of pastoral care is enhanced by an orientation in the direction of the findings of modern psychology. The significant work done by hospital chaplains and the training programs undertaken by many seminaries, as well as the formation of joint study groups, point to a widespread interest in the field.<sup>21</sup> These joint efforts have brought out the fact that the contradiction between the concern of religion for dependence on God and the concern of psychiatry for the growth of human self-sufficiency, is not perhaps quite as irreconcilable as might be supposed. The late Professor Roberts has suggested the partial resolution of this antinomy:

<sup>20</sup> Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, p. 228, footnote.

<sup>21</sup> I refer particularly to the pioneer work done by Chaplains Anton Boisen, Otis Rice, Carroll Wise and Russell Dicks, the various clinical training programs, and the Washington meeting of Psychiatrists and Ministers, as well as to the Columbia University Seminar on Religion and Health. It is significant that the William A. White School of Psychiatry in New York City now provides a course of training for clergymen.

On the theological side it is necessary to emphasize that belief in God is being abused when it is made into a substitute for fulfilling natural and human conditions that are within men's scope. On the psychiatric side it is necessary to recognize that an increasing capacity for responsibility is quite compatible with continued dependence upon forces beyond one's control.<sup>22</sup>

In his role as priest and counselor, the pastor must bring the resources of Christian faith to bear upon the problems of his people. In order to help others, he also must know himself, both his capacities and his limitations. Such knowledge can be gained only by long and honest prayer, self-observation, and a gradual reintegration of his personality in terms of the self-knowledge gained. In his work as counselor, the pastor will be helped by clinical experience and a knowledge of personality functioning. He will learn, for example, that, in his relation to one seeking help, an additional relationship to the one that appears on the surface always develops. This additional relationship is determined by the counselee's problem in living, be it dependency or dominance, for example, with which he unconsciously approaches every interpersonal relation. It becomes the task of the priest-counselor not only to be aware of this distortion on the part of his parishioner, but also to use his authority and competence to assist another human being toward free and responsible existence under God.

#### SUMMARY

Reconciliation in Christian faith is mediated through the Christian community and pastoral care. It is the task of the pastor to preach the Gospel of Christ—the message of God's judgment and His redeeming love—through which man can face his anxiety and his pride, and find himself again in

<sup>22</sup> David Roberts, "Psychiatry and the Doctrine of Original Sin," paper presented to the Columbia University Seminar on Religion and Health, New York, November, 1946, 7 pp. (mimeo.).

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God's mercy. It is the continuing responsibility of the priest and of the holy fellowship to nurture that inward shift from anxiety to faith, from excessive self-concern to self-acceptance as a son of God. The ancient injunction to Peter by the Sea of Tiberias, "Feed my sheep!", applies as forcibly today to the pastor whose people struggle through the dark night of anxiety.

## MAN IN COMMUNION

The modern day Nicodemus comes to Christ under the cover of anonymity. He is alone. His questions bear the sting of wasted years. "Tell me," he says, "why do I burn with anger when all I want is peace? The praise of your skill is on the lips of everyone. Cure the hurt of my soul." And the answer is the same as yesterday, "Unless one is born anew . . ." "But," protests the caller, "I am no mere child, and besides, a man does not give birth to himself—alone. I don't need other people." Again the answer comes with quiet persistence, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." "But why?" the questioner exclaims. "I don't want to enter anything. I have earned my independence. I remember well the hard years of college and the struggle of medical school. There I was led to believe that the practice of medicine is a matter of diagnosis and prescription. What a lie! I found that people want 'talk' with their pills. They insist on telling me about all their pains. Why can't I treat them and have them let me alone? I'm so angry, I haven't read a medical journal in three years!" "You flee from meeting others," says Christ, "and fear is your prison. Open the door of your heart and rejoice that a man is born again."

### MAN FULFILLED IN COMMUNITY

Thus, in fear of human intimacy, man stands alone and outside, filled with anger because of his unfulfilled life. To be born anew is to enter again into the depths of human

intimacy, of knowing and of being known. But a man without faith and without the help of the faith community may linger forever on the threshold. He is unwilling to give up the possibility of real meeting, but yet too frightened to enter for himself. For a man's encounter with himself, which comes as a part of his encounter with God and neighbor, forces him into a night of wrestling with himself.

If real life is meeting, man must face himself in the process of meeting others. But self-searching is impossible apart from a community of genuine concern. One must have ground to stand on if he is to examine his own soul with honesty. It is painfully true of modern history that such a community does not exist. It is equally true that the diminishment of man—his loss of humanity—bears some relation to the disappearance of community. The anxiety of existence, when unanswered in faith, drives man into deep alienation and separation:

. . . alive but alone, belonging—where—?  
Unattached as tumbleweed . . .<sup>1</sup>

It is somewhat ironical that modern man's anxiety about "becoming himself" or "being himself" has in fact coincided with a period in history when his real life, in love, faith and self-fulfillment, has been steadily reduced. This threat to man's existence must be met on the deepest level by faith and loving community. The secular world has rediscovered this reality in psychotherapy. But secular therapy is limited, both in the extent of the community that it can offer and in its handling of the anxiety behind real guilt and meaninglessness. The psychiatrist's office is not the Church, nor are his "interpretations" the absolution. For the Christian, the courage to "become himself" springs from within the Holy Spirit community, as he discovers and fulfills his elemental relation to God in freedom. When the prodigal son came to

<sup>1</sup> Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*, p. 43. Used by permission of the publisher.

himself, his relation to his father was recovered, a relation that on one side only had been lost in sin and separation. Self-realization as a goal for living takes on meaning only in relation to the community in which it is fulfilled. Man finds himself—who he is and what his destiny is—through meeting and response. For this, his only opportunity is in the actual community in which he lives, loves, believes, hopes and fears. For the Christian the Church becomes the place where lost humanity is recovered. The “new man” in Christ lives in the community of the Holy Spirit wherein the whole person—reason, emotion and vital senses—is being fulfilled.

#### COMMUNION

In Christian community, anxiety is broken in the depths of man's soul through faith, and it is healed in loving communion. The Christian life is lived out in the holy fellowship. It is significant that the New Testament is more concerned with the quality of the new life in Christ than it is with laying down rules for Church order. It rather proclaims a joyful Gospel that the spirit of God has been poured out upon those that, having repented and received baptism, now live in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, where the shared life of bread broken and prayers offered flows naturally from a common faith in Christ.

The early Church must be understood on the background of the “givenness” of community life in Hebrew thought. This is difficult for those that understand community as an aggregate of individuals. In Hebrew life, the individual lives by participation in the common life, and that totality of unity and harmony he calls *shalom*. The first Christians found that they had been brought into a new kind of fellowship, or communion, by the work of the Holy Spirit. Those that shared the common life in Christ were convinced that the miracles of faith working through love, which are described in the Book of Acts, were the unique products of their communion together. Charles Gore has

said that if you had asked one of the early believers what it means to be a Christian, you would have gotten one of two answers: (1) "It is to confess that Jesus is Lord"; or (2) "It is to have received the Spirit."<sup>2</sup>

To the extent to which the Christian fellowship today approximates its ancient counterpart, it is a place where anxiety is reduced. It is obvious that anxiety is overcome only in moments of triumphant faith. It remains a challenge to the Christian in every other moment of existence. St. Paul has reminded us that as long as man is "in this tent," he sighs with anxiety, even though a new power is at work within him in the redeeming love of God. Loving communion is both realized, and yet not fully achieved, in the Christian fellowship. It is a reality where man has passed from anxious self-centeredness to genuine selfhood, and it is not achieved to the extent that man never completely overcomes the barriers that separate and isolate him. It is in communion, however, that the Christian fellowship provides man with the opportunity to discover the implications of new life in Christ.

Psychotherapists have pointed out that those that suffer from disturbances in living must undergo a "corrective emotional experience" in order to be helped. In therapy such an experience is characterized by an acceptance and genuine concern that encourages a growing honesty in interpersonal relations. In reality, the Christian community has meant just such acceptance and warm personal concern for many people. It must be admitted, however, that too frequently a rigid spirit has prevented the Christian community from becoming a genuine Christian fellowship. In such instances, the people who call themselves "churchmen" fail to give evidence that they have experienced the meaning of salvation in their own lives. They suffer from the common anxiety that "dogs" modern man. As Christians, their failure to

<sup>2</sup> Charles Gore, *The Holy Spirit and the Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), p. 2.

settle anxiety more effectively is the more tragic because they stand so near its deepest resolution. On the other hand, where the enthusiasm of the early Church is still alive or has been reborn within Christendom, where the Gospel is truly preached and the sacraments truly received, the Christian communion is a reality that stands as a strong bulwark against subversive anxiety. This is a recorded fact in the clinical experience of an ever growing number of psychiatrists and counselors who have concerned themselves with the relation of Christianity to health.

But a warning is in order here: the primary task of Christianity is not the relief of anxiety. When that becomes its goal, it is as useless as salt that has lost its savor. The business of the Church is to show forth Jesus Christ, not only with lips, but also in living. The exchange of faith for anxiety comes about as a result of man's responding to God in Jesus Christ. In that response and in the community created by it, the dark loneliness of separation is overcome. There, having passed from death unto life, we belong to one another not because of anything we do, but because we belong to God. The resolution of anxiety is a fruit of Christian faith. It comes as a gift, while we are preoccupied with entering into the joy of our heavenly Father.

#### THE CHURCH AS *Koinonia*

In the New Testament two words are used to describe the Christian community. *Ekklesia* (church) refers to those that are called out of the world to become God's people. *Koinonia* in the New Testament is a unique word that always refers to the common life in the Holy Spirit community. *Koinonia* can be only roughly translated as "fellowship," because the latter has come to mean a kind of merely human intimacy that does not take into account the fact that God, the Holy Spirit, dwells in the *Koinonia*. The New Testament scholar, L. S. Thornton, reminds us that the *Koinonia*, as described in Acts, involved "the sharing of a

common life whose source was God" and whose eschatological outlook was reflected in the fact that all things were held in common.<sup>3</sup> For these Christians, it was inconceivable that either the gifts of this world or the Holy Spirit could be possessed individually. Theirs was a new covenant with God, who had called them out of the world to share in the new community of the Holy Spirit. As participants in that new covenant, their life in the Church grew out of their life in the *Koinonia* and was dependent upon it. Thus St. Paul reminds his Corinthian brethren:

It was God . . . who Himself called you into fellowship with His Son and in His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord . . . (I Cor. 1:9, Robertson and Plummer).

The *Koinonia* is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is not man's creation. One must enter it with the same attitude with which one comes to God: with repentance and confession in the heart and on the lips. But the mystery of this fellowship is such that when one is drawn into it as a sinner, one finds himself accepted as a Christian brother and as a child of God. Love is the reality of the Christian *Koinonia*, but its source is God and not the good will of men. The Church is the creation, not of man's will to have a church, but of the primary relation between God and man. It is in this sense that we must understand the love, *agape*, of Christian communion. Freely and spontaneously given, it relates those that share it in an abiding community wherein the fullest development of individual gifts is fostered, while the meaning of existence is interpreted in terms of that *agape*. This is the unique character of the *Koinonia*: it embodies the kind of love wherein freedom and selfhood are affirmed and most fully realized in corporate community. The early Christians found no difficulty in both *belonging* to God through the holy fellowship and yet most truly possessing

<sup>3</sup> L. S. Thornton, *The Common Life in the Body of Christ* (London: Dacre Press, 1941), pp. 1 ff.

themselves as members of that faith-trust community. Like Aristotle's man, they could be happy and bear all the chances of life becomingly, because they could not be separated from the love of God, which had searched them out and had quieted their deepest fears.

One of the sources of great sadness in our world is the fact that modern man has no home, nor is "at home" in the world he knows. There is poignant truth in Thomas Wolfe's theme that *You Can't Go Home Again*, because *home* involves more than the physical surroundings of one's youth. The Hebrews were forever reminding themselves that they were "strangers" and "sojourners" in the land, as their fathers had been before them. Man, the pilgrim, looks for a city whose builder and founder is God. But the Christian pilgrimage has not been without its way station of faith along the road where the Church, as *Koinonia*, sustains the traveler in the ongoing community of faith. To be sure, the Christian *Koinonia* is not a static community of fixed relations, even in love. It is a living fellowship where men grow in grace. The *agape* experienced in coming to Christian faith cannot be mechanically incorporated into the believer's relations with himself and with others. He must accept and share the gift within this fellowship. St. Paul reminds us that the greatest of all the *charismata* (gifts of the Holy Spirit) is "God's love which has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit [which] has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). While that love is given and shared, it can never be claimed as a simple human achievement. It belongs to those that neither try to possess it alone nor to make it their shield of righteousness. It is present in those who are "as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

It is true, however, that the same *agape* that brings the believer to a new life in faith has established a historical community where all men, even in anxiety, may look and live beyond the tragedy of their historical moment. Within

that community, a power is available to live through every affliction—"imprisonments, tumults, labors"—with quiet confidence. He that lives in Christ is never free of the temptation to sin and of the danger of separation, but he that has known the love of God can never quite forget the healing fellowship that restores the sinner. Every sin, every occasion for repentance and return, becomes an opportunity for deeper self-understanding and more profound thanksgiving to God.

The modern emphasis upon self-fulfillment as a goal for living stands in danger of becoming only a pious hope, unless there is equal emphasis upon the kind of community that fosters mutual self-fulfillment. The rigors of economic and social deprivation, and the wounds aggravated by an environment that does not care, seriously limit any change for the better in the individual. Those that work in the fields of social science and human understanding are beginning to recognize this fact by their "team work" approach as helpers. Thus social workers, psychologists, doctors, and ministers, among others, are finding not only that the patient benefits from this varied approach, but also that, with the specialists working as a team, it is more likely that the whole man will be kept in mind. But much psychiatry is still involved in a common illusion of this culture: that "changed" individuals can sustain their improvement, while living in the midst of destructive society. The attitude, suggested by the title of Niebuhr's book *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, is still widespread. Even within Christianity, this sectarian influence has obscured the real work of the Church. Where the Church has become simply the department of religion in our common life rather than the heart and conscience of society, its moral pronouncements are likely to have little influence in changing the social climate. The Church is more than a repository of moral values. It is a common life in the Body of Christ. Fortunately, the brand of preaching that exhorts a kind of individualistic discipleship is beginning to give

way to a life-in-the-holy-fellowship concern. The Christian emphasis upon selfhood is derived, not from the perspective of man in isolation, but of man in communion—where his total being meets and responds to others in that fellowship.

Personal values are so much a part of the Hebrew-Christian tradition that they easily can be overlooked. The recovery of man's wholeness, or salvation, is the proper work of the Church. But it stems from God's action rather than from man's concern with "personal values." Gilson, the French Roman Catholic philosopher, has said, "We are persons because we are the work of a person." To be sure, personal terms have limitations when we use them in reference to the Creator and sustainer of the universe. The word *God* refers to more than can be contained in our concept of personhood, but faith has always assumed that man's response in personal terms refers to that in God that is personal. Hence, the ultimate Christian symbol, the Trinity, is cast in personal terms, and it represents an effort to picture the deepest meaning of community where every personal life is supported and transcended. Here man discovers that self-fulfillment and community are one in the divine ground of existence. In the world God works through community. It is evident that real community is impossible apart from genuine selfhood. Hence, any society that begins by destroying personal values will end by destroying itself. This is true not only of totalitarian countries, but also of any "enlightened nation" or group that makes a fetish of conformity.

Indeed, one might say that for the Christian every social organization should be judged by the degree of freedom and personhood that it affords. An emphasis on the community or the group as an end in itself could serve to crush the integrity and spontaneity of the individual. Here the nature of the Church as *Koinonia* is crucial. The common life created by the Holy Spirit restores and strengthens every individual in terms of his essentially personal expressions—

his freedom and his selfhood. This is personally attested today by countless men and women who have suffered under oppression. Their witness, like that of the blind man who was healed by Christ, bears the authority of evident authenticity: "One thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25).

In his remarkable account of slave labor in Russia, Pastor Gollwitzer tells how the Communists attempted to destroy every expression of individuality in their prisoners. They searched their victims constantly "because any private life is robbery against the community." This is the logical outcome of a social system in which "human material" is always exploited for the "good" of society. During captivity, Pastor Gollwitzer and his companions were sustained by a faith in which their individuality was constantly renewed. The uniqueness of each person was deepened through the response of others and in the unbroken, though distant, love of their brethren at home. Wherever there is an "I," there is also a "Thou" that gives life to that "I" by response. On the deepest level, every "I" is a gift in response to the Eternal "Thou." It is only in a community of grace and mutual self-giving that humanity is fully realized.

It is interesting to note that many psychiatrists today regard such basic personality disorders as homosexuality and narcissism, as character manifestations rather than as unalterable biologically fixed attitudes, and that these disturbances tend to disappear when confidence is regained in genuine interpersonal exchange and the character disorder is resolved. Hence, the kind of relationships that the community affords the individual determines to some extent the degree of selfhood possible to that individual as a person; and the degree to which the individual is aware of himself as an independent and distinct person determines his ability to enter into real community.

The vicious circle between individual and community

failure has been broken by the action of God in setting the Church in the midst of the world. The Gospel gathers those that hear and those that see in a kingdom of responding love where, in hearing and in seeing, the miracle of creation is continued. Here both the individual and the community are caught up and transformed within the divine Trinity within the creating, redeeming, and sustaining love of God. Man's deepest realization of himself, then, is possible here where the healing power of communion flows from that love which he encounters in nature and in the depths of his own soul, and supremely in God as the reconciling Christ.

The corporate significance of personality as well as individual selfhood has found expression in the Christian *Koinonia*. The early Christians began to call the Church the "Body of Christ." For them it was a living organism where, *in Christ*, they continued the new creation that God has set in the midst of the world. For them it lived and had substance and historical reality in the community of those who had experienced resolution of their anxiety in Christian faith. They shared the new life, beyond alienation, in the Church, in its prayer, worship, sacraments, and renewing faith. There, in communion, their solidarity was a living reality. Khomiakoff, the Russian theologian, has expressed this character of the Christian *Koinonia* in the following passage:

No one is saved alone; he who is saved, is saved in the Church, as a member of her, and in unity with all her other members. If anyone believes, he is in the communion of faith; if he loves he is in the communion of love; if he prays he is in the communion of prayer.

The Christian communion embraces man and society in a corporate fellowship, which is constantly being renewed by the uniting and redeeming love of God. Its *Koinonia* is

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Lawrence Phillips in *Anglo-Catholic Congress Report* (London: Dacre Press), III, 14.

the basis both for the development of personality and for the social solidarity of all men. This uniting fellowship swept across the ancient world and, for a number of centuries, gave unity to an otherwise crumbling civilization. Indeed, it became the basis of a new civilization which, although weakened and seriously qualified by man's experience in modern history, still holds the key to the unity and solidarity so tragically needed by divided and isolated man today. St. Paul's Trinitarian "Grace" bears the note of significant need that might well be the prayer of every man in this age of anxiety: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all" (II Cor. 13:14, AV).

#### THE DYNAMICS OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

St. Paul reminds us that "the Kingdom of God is not in words but in power." Words—"brotherhood," "peace," etc.—can not heal the deepest hurt of modern man. Alone and helpless, he looks again for the saving power of community. His desperate need to belong somewhere is evident in the astonishing success of collectivism. Communism and Fascism reveal the danger of man's abysmal loneliness. They are philosophies of desperation, which promise to fill the huge vacuum created by the impotence of words and the lack of community. That pain of loneliness and uncertainty has left modern man ready to purchase certainty, even the certainty of herd conformity, at any price. Despite the accomplishments of our technical civilization, with its emphasis upon mass production and individualism, we are discovering that we are strangers and alone in our cities of identical houses and labor-saving gadgets. Neither suburban "heavens" nor the benefits of economic prosperity can hide our emptiness. In such a world, it is not surprising that the promises of comradeship that the Communists hawk have been bought by some.

It is also significant that our deprivations of real community have driven many, within the Church and without, to explore again the meaning of group life. Under the stress of war and imprisonment and the threat even of extinction, Christian communities based on a common life have again come into being. In war devastated Europe, as well as in the impoverished areas of a Harlem or a Jersey City, the Church has begun to find itself again.<sup>5</sup> In the violent years of modern history, the forced associations in prison camps and the common enterprises in the face of danger have in some instances been transformed into real communities by corporate prayer and Bible reading. This renewal is evident in the spiritual journey of a Karl Stern. The story of his life, which came to maturity in Hitlerite Germany, bears testimony of the power of the spirit to renew life and create community out of the nothingness left over from man's violence. His book, *The Pillar of Fire*, is a heartening witness to the reality of the community of grace in a world that seems convinced that it is God-forsaken.

While these signs of recovered community are hopeful, they are not likely to produce great change unless this problem of lost community becomes a major concern for many people. It is encouraging that educators and members of other professions concerned with human relations have made a good beginning in this field with the development of the National Training Laboratory in Group Dynamics at Bethel, Maine. During the past decade scores of representatives from most fields of American life have gathered there to study the processes of group life. The "laboratory," in this case, consists of those that are participating, and the method of study provides the opportunity to observe not only what a group accomplishes by way of goals, etc., but also how the members of the group relate to each other as they go

<sup>5</sup> I refer to the "new life" movements in Germany, France, and Britain; and to the "open rectory" work of Episcopal priests in Jersey City; and to the work in East Harlem Protestant Parish.

about their work. Here is a perspective much needed in Church groups. How often a "Christian" committee plunges through its tasks in rigid "unchristian" ways? How often are our leaders bewildered when results are disappointing and interest wanes?

To live through an experience in which one is forced to observe both himself and others as they relate to one another, and to face the necessity of correcting one's own impressions and judgment against those of one's teammates, is to participate in a deeper way in common life, because one moves in the direction of a more sensitive and accurate awareness of himself and others. This deeper participation is urgently needed in our parish life. Christian community cannot be merely proclaimed. It must also be demonstrated as the power of God unto salvation.

It is significant that the secular disciplines have become concerned with *Group Dynamics*. The word *dynamics* suggests the atmosphere of the laboratory where the physicist is observing the action of force on bodies. Insofar as the interpreters of Group Dynamics wish to keep their status as natural scientists, they have insisted that their work retain this kinship with physics. This approach becomes difficult to maintain, however, when one recalls that a group consists of human beings, and not of determinate objects. However predictable man's behavior in a group may be, his freedom is a factor that cannot be left out of consideration. With this precaution in mind, however, the laboratory study of groups in action yields rich insights. For instance, Kurt Lewin's studies revealed that the acceptance of a new set of values and beliefs can *never* be brought about in single units, but only by accepting belongingness to the group as a whole.<sup>6</sup> This speaks directly to those who insist that Christianity is only a moral exercise for the valiant!

<sup>6</sup> Kurt Lewin, *Resolving Social Conflicts* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), p. 59.

The word *dynamics* is very much in the vocabulary of the New Testament. There the expression, “the *dunamis* (power) of God,” is used frequently to describe the power of God invisibly present in the Church assembled. The evidences of godly power are abundant in that early Church. Renewal of life, experienced in a fellowship beyond guilt and despair, transformed a scattered and frightened people into a sustaining community whose fruits issued in faith, hope, and love. Indeed, one may regard the Epistles of St. Paul as an effort to interpret the dynamics of that amazing power that the Church had already experienced. The practical result of faith in Christ was the establishment of a new community, in which the members were constantly being restored to one another and to God. Their “group dynamics” was the power of God in their fellowship; their “communication” resulted from their Holy Communion; and although there was a place within this early Church for diversities of gifts (or roles played), it was the same Holy Spirit who sustained them all. In other words, the Christian community is the work of the Holy Spirit.

While the advocates of group dynamics have gathered impressive data on the functioning and the malfunctioning of groups, they seem to be less concerned with the spiritual forces that mold a group together. What is it that makes members of a group of one mind, and of one heart, and of one spirit? There is a tendency in the field of human relations to insist that individual needs alone constitute group cohesiveness and that, therefore, the notion of being caught up in a spirit greater than that of the individual is an illusion. This is somewhat qualified by those who regard their group life as being based on the assumption that “democracy is a way of life.” It seems obvious, however, that the democratic way of life involves more than the application of techniques. It involves an act of faith about the ultimate meaning of life and a commitment to certain kinds of human

behavior that are "democratic," as opposed to others that are "undemocratic." Indeed, one of the deeply felt concerns of those in group work is the possibility that their insights and techniques may be used to manipulate and coerce people. It would seem that this problem will continue to plague any sincere person who regards man as a determinate object whose freedom is an illusion. Wherever freedom is destroyed, either by pathology or by ideology, man's status as a person is diminished, and he is reduced to the level of a thing that invites manipulation.

The dynamic of Christian community is based on the common assumption that all life is religious, having its roots in the creative work of God. The *Koinonia* is a faith community whose character is drawn, not from its degree of human intimacy, but from its communion with God. It exists in Christ under the definite and objective conditions laid down at Pentecost; namely, continuing in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. In contrast to secular community, the Church lives for the proclamation of its faith, and its life and worship strive to be a living witness to the Lord of its faith until His coming again. Where there is no reluctance to declare a faith, the problem of cohesion, meaning, and purpose provide no embarrassment. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church and the action involved in sacramentally recalling God's mighty acts in the history of salvation, issue in a common life in which the keynote is expectancy.

Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come (II Cor. 5:17).

This is the promise of St. Paul, born not of pious hope, but of confident experience in the community of the Holy Spirit. That community is the deepest need of modern man.

Every community has its own symbols of communica-

tion, as well as its own liturgy, which is the public manifestation of its faith in action. Genuine community is possible only when its symbols provide an effective means of communication between its members. It is clear that, in the process of being drawn together, human beings learn the symbols and liturgical acts that express their common life and faith. The new member of a regiment is "traditioned" with tales of his outfit told over and over. A part of every group initiation is that *living into* the spirit and life of the group. The Jewish family recalls with moving action and liturgy the great event in Hebrew history, "When Israel went out of Egypt!"

The significance of this act of deliverance, as well as the meaning of freedom for the Hebrew, is assured a place in daily life by the specific actions that are directed in Deuteronomy. There not only are the commandments to be laid upon their hearts as signs upon their hands and as frontlets between their eyes, but also the meaning of those actions is recited in order that succeeding generations may join the chorus:

"We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand . . ." (Deuteronomy 6:21).

The Church also communicates its faith by holy actions—the continual living rehearsal of the mighty acts of God in history. By acting out the holy events in her life, the Church makes living memorial of her existence. This is no mere use of symbol to designate objects. There is a living, intrinsic relation between the symbol, let us say, of the Holy Communion, and the fact of being in holy communion. Thus liturgy is the living expression of Christian community. It is the work of the people, the concretizing of their faith. Perhaps this understanding of liturgy will find fuller illustration as we discuss worship.

WORSHIP AND COMMUNITY

What life have you if you have not life together?  
There is no life that is not lived in community,  
And no community not lived in the praise of God.<sup>7</sup>

The poet suggests that worship is the heart of community and that real life is impossible apart from that worshipping community. The Church is a fellowship of thanksgiving, where the walls of loneliness are shattered by spontaneous self-giving in praise of God. Its note of joy is the measure of its freedom *from* moral "oughts" to freedom *for* a life of praise and thanksgiving:

O come, let us sing unto the Lord;  
let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation  
(Psalm 95:1).

In worship, man responds in the depths of his being. Religious symbols become the bearers of that experience of mystery and awe that transcends ordinary experience. Otto Rank has said that man is born and dies "beyond psychology," but he can live beyond it only through vital religious experience. The Bible expresses the same truth in simpler words:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out . . . not knowing where he was to go (Hebrews 11:8).

Life does not afford us the psychological certainty which we would like to have. If we walk at all, we walk by faith. Worship is the wellspring of that faith-walking. In genuine outgoing worship, man is in touch with the deepest source of his being; his inner splits are healed; and his isolation is overcome. An offering less than a heartfelt "I" response to the divine "Thou" will not suffice here. Every pretense and

<sup>7</sup>T. S. Eliot, "Choruses from the Rock," *The Complete Poems and Plays* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1952), pp. 97 ff. Used by permission of the publisher.

evasion, every mask, is stripped away when one meets God "face to face." The astonishing truth that comes from such an encounter is that we live beyond it. That is the gift of life that the worshipper knows in his innermost being. That is the secret that Jacob discovered after a dark night of wrestling.

I have seen God face to face  
And yet my life is preserved (Genesis 32:30).

It would seem that many of the same forces are at work in genuine worship and in therapy. Both involve emancipation of the self from consuming egocentricity and a growing sense of communication within the self and with the world. Both manifest the power of interpersonal relations to draw the individual out of isolation and into community. Worship re-establishes communion with the deepest source of community—the ultimate "I-Thou" relation, a relation that transcends every human relation. Worship involves community, and corporate worship enhances the sense of belongingness and of individual worth that, as Chaplain Otis Rice has said, "comes from participation in a ritual, an observance, a group experience, which transcends individual loneliness and isolation."<sup>8</sup> Some years ago, H. Flanders Dunbar, whose work in psychosomatic medicine has opened many new vistas, suggested that pastors and priests could best further the cause of man's health by devoting their energy to the development of new religious techniques of prayer, meditation, and liturgy that would heal by making man conscious of wholeness; that is, by providing him with the opportunity to experience unity within himself and with God. Such a suggestion is worthy of serious consideration. It must be borne in mind, however, that worship is response to God, in whose strength man's anxious self seeking is shattered and in whose mercy alone man's life is restored. The motive for

<sup>8</sup> Otis Rice, an essay in *Psychiatry and the War*, ed. Frank J. Sladen (Springfield, Ill.: C. C. Thomas, 1943), p. 210.

worship, therefore, is thanksgiving. That motive comes with a radical shift from prideful self-concern to a faith-trust relation with God. It cannot be produced by techniques of prayer.

Cyril Richardson has written that ". . . in sacrifice is comprehended the whole mystery of worship."<sup>9</sup> In common usage the word *sacrifice* connotes an action by which one voluntarily gives up some possession in order to gain that which he conceives to be a greater good. We can readily see how sacrifice is involved in growth toward emotional maturity. In order to become a man, *i.e.* mature, one must "put away childish things." Infantile dependency must give way to a self-strength that comes from standing on one's own feet. Capricious and fragile moods must be given up for a greater tolerance of frustration; indeed, the ways of childhood must ultimately be sacrificed in order to be mature. But sacrifice in the religious sense involves more than calculated steps toward a greater goal. He who would be renewed before God is moved to offer himself along with his gift, that losing his life, he may find it! This sacrifice grows out of the death of repentance. It is an offering made not from the heights of self-importance, but from the brokenness that man knows in God's judgment. Those that have experienced renewal, either through therapy or religion, are apt to recognize something in the latter, as belonging to their own spiritual history.

More strictly, sacrifice refers to the making of sacred offerings whereby that which is offered becomes both the means of expressing thanksgiving to God and the vehicle of His assurance of acceptance and grace to the suppliant. The bread and wine of Holy Communion in the Christian Church are striking illustrations of sacrifice in this sense. From ancient times sacrifice has been a normal part of the Hebrew-Christian worship of God. It must be kept in mind

<sup>9</sup> C. C. Richardson, "The Formal Rites and Ceremonies of the Church," in *The Church and Mental Health*, ed. Paul Maves (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 98.

that the symbols (bread and wine, etc.) become the bearers of man's self-offering in order that he may recover that unity with God that has been lost in sin. The offerings of the Hebrews and the Christians, when handed over (made sacred) to God, symbolize thereby the way in which the self is handed over wholly and spiritually in worship. That which is sacrificed is renewed in holiness by the action of God's spirit that now dwells in it. Thus is fulfilled the promise of God: newness of being in Christ!

Psychiatry has taught us that unresolved guilt and anxiety exact their own tribute or "sacrifice" by way of unproductive activity in the life of the individual. Excessive handwashing is commonly considered to be symptomatic of unresolved guilt, whether imagined or real. It is an unconsciously motivated activity, dictated by an uneasy conscience. It reminds us that sacrifice may be motivated by destructive attitudes, as well as by responsive faith. Christian sacrifice, on the other hand, springs from the experience of release from anxiety and guilt, together with their accompanying alienation from God. Here before the altar the Christian, after honest self-searching in the presence of Him "from whom no secrets are hid," offers himself as "a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice." The Church, following the New Testament, added an emphatic note of social relevance when she insisted that a man first must seek reconciliation with his brother and then bring his gift before the altar. The Christian sacrifice, the Eucharist, is an offering of the whole community. It is alien to individualism. It is a revolutionary force that promises to destroy every *status quo* built upon iniquity. Its force will not be spent until the worshiping community becomes the Kingdom of God, and *Judgment* runs "down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

Intrinsic in and fundamental to Christian worship is its distinctive action to carry through the resolve begun in sacrifice. Worship includes not only what we declare with

our lips, but also what we show forth in our lives through service and humble working before God. All this, and nothing less, comprises the liturgy of the people. The writers of the New Testament were in daily contact with the "new sacrifices," wrought by a community at one in Christ. Forgiveness and renewal, pardon and peace—these were visible sacraments of that new power at work among them. These are the "first-fruits" of that promised Kingdom of God which is beginning to come in the Church.

It is in this light that we must understand the healing work of worship and sacrament. Within the Church the great sacraments came to be distinctive symbols, wherein the gift of salvation in Christ was acted out. Here promises became reality. In baptism and in penance, the Church reclaimed for God those lost in sin. In the ministry to the sick (the Laying on of Hands and Holy Unction), as in the Holy Eucharist, the Church acted out the conditions of recovered wholeness and restored communion beyond separations. Thus in the ministry to the sick, the Church through prayer and the use of oil blessed by the bishops (or more simply by laying on of hands) provided a tangible contact with the holy community and with God. The intention in the Church's ministry to the sick was the removal of that which separated a man from God and the opening of the way to his receiving the restorative grace freely given. In this sense, recovered health is a by-product of that new relation to God, and St. Paul's sentiments become a prayer:

None of us lives to himself,  
and none of us dies to himself.  
If we live, we live to the Lord,  
and if we die, we die to the Lord;  
so then, whether we live or whether we die,  
we are the Lord's (Romans 14:7-8).

It is not our task here to enter into a discussion of how the sacraments operate, but it seems safe to assume that

where they have been held in high esteem in the Church, they have been regarded as *special instruments* of God's grace, which is received by *faith* in the believer. Within the Christian ethos these sacramental acts have become the bearers of God's healing and restorative grace. Even in a world of the tragic division of natural and spiritual powers, the sacraments remained as unifying symbols that employed bread and wine, water and light, and all the powers of nature to bestow spiritual meaning and healing power. It is interesting to note that Jung, in his discussion of the relation of Christian symbols to the unconscious, points out that even though Luther rejected some of the sacramental interpretations of the medieval Church, he held fast to the immediately effective and sensuous presence in taking the bread and wine in Holy Communion. Thus, when his colleagues were moving in the direction of a lesser emphasis upon the sacrament as a simple memorial, Luther insisted upon its character as a vital and present union with Christ. Jung writes:

He perceived in it not merely a token, but the actual sensuous reality with its contingent and immediate experience; these were for him an indispensable religious necessity. He therefore claimed the actual presence of the body and blood of Christ in the communion.<sup>10</sup>

Carroll Wise has said that the reality of religious symbols grows out of "an intrinsic association between the experience and the form of expression, an association grasped by insight or faith."<sup>11</sup> This dynamic relation between symbol and reality is evident in the Christian sacraments. We have already discussed baptism and penance as sacraments that

<sup>10</sup> Carl Jung, *Psychological Types* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1926), p. 84.

<sup>11</sup> Carroll Wise, *Religion in Illness and Health* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1942), p. 185.

mediate, beyond tragic anxiety and sin, the recovered relation to God. The Church's ministry to the sick and the Holy Eucharist continue and strengthen that resolution of anxiety by maintaining the fact of holy communion.

The Church, through her symbols and her fellowship, is equipped to embrace the life of man from birth to death. From the picture of the Church in the New Testament, as St. Paul and the Evangelists describe its life and prayer, as well as St. James' description of the elders at prayer beside the sick, we see the beginning of a holy community that set out with magnificent spirit to minister to the real needs of every man. Again and again through the centuries, the Church has been recalled to that early vision and significant ministry. The following words of Luther portray the fresh hope, inspired by such a holy fellowship and sacraments in one who knew the full agony of anxiety:

If anyone be in despair, if he be distressed by his sinful conscience or terrified by death, or have any other burden on his heart and desire to be rid of them all, let him go joyfully to the sacrament of the altar and lay down his grief in the midst of the congregation and seek help from the entire company of the spiritual body . . . Therefore, the immeasurable grace and mercy of God are given us in this sacrament that we may there lay down all misery and tribulation and put it on the congregation and especially on Christ, and may joyfully strengthen and comfort ourselves and say: "Though I am a sinner and have fallen, though this or that misfortune has befallen me, I will go to the sacrament to receive a sign from God that I have on my side Christ's righteousness, life and sufferings, with all holy angels and all the blessed in heaven and all pious men on earth. If I die, I am not alone in death; if I suffer, they suffer with me. I have shared all my misfortune with

Christ and the saints, since I have a sure sign of their love toward me.”<sup>12</sup>

#### HEALTH AND HOLY COMMUNION

Man's lack of health is essentially a disruption of unity within himself, with his world, and with the ground of his being, God. Every psychiatric classification is a description of the shatteredness of human existence, of man's isolation, and of his tragic effort to close the gap that sets him apart. The neurotic suffers from an intolerable anxiety that transforms the simplest human relation into a compulsive struggle in which the manipulation of others affords only temporary respite from his own insecurity. The paranoid and the schizophrenic have become rigid in their rejection of community: one with the fixed notion that the outside world is hostile and persecutory, and the other with a tendency to withdraw and to become preoccupied with himself. We have noted from time to time the community's participation in this tendency to divide man—spirit from matter in philosophy, mind from body in medicine, and body from soul in religion. Even in the care of the sick we have tended to intensify loneliness by almost obsessive rituals of isolation in hospitals and sick rooms. An illustration of this tendency has been the prevailing custom, in our efficient hospitals, of separating mother and child soon after birth. Thus, one of the first experiences of the infant is that of isolation. Fortunately, there is a growing tendency, where possible, to keep mother and child in closer contact. When this is extended to profound preparation for and adjustment to the delivery of a child, the shock of birth is partially absorbed.

Anxiety is the inevitable component of isolation. The child at birth is thrust into a world quite different from that which he knew in the protective experience of the womb.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Luther, *Works* (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Co. and Castle Press, 1915), II, 18.

His helplessness and dependency set off reactions that are later to characterize anxiety in adult behavior. If it happens that birth and early infancy are accompanied by no genuine love and affection from significant people around him, there is every likelihood that he will soon adopt a pattern of compliance or aggression to protect himself against that world "he never made" and in which he feels alone. But since such behavior is designed to punish a hostile world, it is motivated by much hostility and is accompanied by guilt feelings. Indeed, behind neurotic behavior in general, there is a basic insecurity of the individual that is determined both by his reaction to primal anxiety and by the reflected appraisals of those people intimately associated with him. Malignant interpersonal relations in the family and in society are the breeding grounds of that anxiety, guilt, and hostility that ultimately wreak havoc upon the unity of man's personality.

In religious terms we have held that primal anxiety accompanies man's leap into existence. Man's harmony within himself and with the ground of his being is symbolized by his essential goodness in creation. His disruption and contradictory behavior in existence is the *fact* of his sin. Man's fall is not an event that took place once and for all in Adam and Eve; it is a part of the experience of every man. In anxiety man is tempted to secure himself by desperate means against the primordial insecurity that he feels. He resorts to conscious and unconscious devices to hide from himself the terrifying truth of his helplessness. Thus primal anxiety that might be resolved in faith is, instead, transformed into the driving anxiety of man's life in sin.

Two factors relating to the functioning of the whole personality seem to be well-established facts in psychoanalytic practice. The first is that behavior has meaning. A pattern repeated again and again is meaningful in terms of the history and responses of a given personality. The second formulation is that unconscious motives play their part in human activity. The given pattern may relate to an indi-

vidual's unconscious desire to punish or to submit to the authoritarian figures in his life. Therapists have discovered that health for the individual, suffering from ambivalent motives, lies in the direction of bringing together his conscious and unconscious life in a corrective interpersonal experience that permits him gradually to see the meaning of his behavior and to regain communication with the various parts of his total personality; in short, to recover his unity and to resolve his hostility and guilt.

It is in the light of these facts about man's health and of these insights of psychiatry into its preservation that we have interpreted religious symbols and that we turn now to the sacrament of Holy Communion. We must emphasize that a symbol, by definition, grows out of an *intrinsic association* between the experience and its form of expression. Its meaning, including its emotional and intellectual factors, is grasped by faith and insight, which are functions of the total personality. Religious symbols are not restrictive scientific formulae; they are grounds of participating reality, which convey meaning to the whole man. The ancient Church healed man's brokenness by providing him with specific means to confess and to experience forgiveness of his sin, and by incorporating him into the *Koinonia*. That holy fellowship through the centuries has provided a healing emotional experience in which believers have been bound together in faith and hope, laughter and tears.

It is informative to compare the ancient Church's understanding of the Eucharist with later interpretations. The sense of unity and solidarity in the ancient world made it quite natural to experience the *holy* in the elements of bread and wine, quite apart from elaborate explanations as to how the holy is present. But it would seem that by the time the late medieval Church promulgated the doctrine of transubstantiation, the ancient, unconscious unity of spirit and nature was already beginning to break down. Some writers suggest that the anxiety that accompanied the break-up of

the medieval synthesis was the driving force behind the elaborate doctrinal formulations. At any rate, the doctrine of transubstantiation appears to be a conscious effort to deny what in fact was beginning to be present in the unconscious—namely, doubt and uncertainty about the sacrament. Indeed, the whole late medieval emphasis upon doctrinal exactitude and elaborate schemes to gain merit may be viewed in one aspect as frantic efforts to still the anxiety and the doubt that was springing from man's innermost being. In this light, the Reformation and the Renaissance were in part further outward manifestations of these rising doubts. The actual presence of Christ in the Eucharist became increasingly difficult to maintain in a world that was losing its sense of unity and solidarity.

Psychologically, we stand on the opposite side of the late medieval problem in understanding the sacrament of Holy Communion. Our hearts yearn for the efficacy of this sacrament, but our minds are still indentured slaves to rationalism. There are many signs of change. In recent years, most of the Protestant churches have moved in the direction of a high and emotionally profound regard for Holy Communion, while still consciously rejecting it as a specific locus of the Holy. In the Anglican Communion and in certain Roman Catholic and Protestant "new life" communities, the Eucharist has become the focus of renewal and the heart of social concern. Indeed, while the theologians still debate the great issues of reunion, a quiet revolution has been taking place throughout the Church in which liturgical revival, biblical theology, and communal rebirth find their common quickening in this sacrament. It is possible that those who have lived in brokenness are now unconsciously reaching out for this experience of oneness; but the problem remains that they are still the children of a Cartesian world in which the very idea of sacrament poses real difficulties.

The Holy Communion is a symbol full of intimate association with the deepest experience and needs of man's

life. The bread and wine used are themselves products of nature, which become bearers of spiritual meaning and saving power by their very dedication in the sacrament. As food, given by a loving Father, they are associated with love and endowed with a positive self value. Menninger has pointed out that being given food is the first experience of love the child understands and that there is a significant relation between this fact and the Christian sacrament.<sup>13</sup> Love precedes genuine self-regard in every area of man's life: Thus, "we love Him because He first loved us."

Holy Communion is first of all *corporate* action, in which the whole of creation participates. It is God's way of gathering His own unto Himself again, and it is once and for all centered in human experience by the specific direction: "Take, eat, this is my Body which is broken for you." In obedience to this command, man, as a participant, joins his own creative powers to God's action, and finds thereby his deepest fulfillment.

The sacrament is not, therefore, just contemplation nor pious meditation, but *action* toward the realization of man's salvation. In terms of psychodrama, man acts out the conditions of his recovered health. St. Thomas Aquinas spoke of the Eucharist as "re-presenting" the actual sacrifice of Christ in such a way that man participates in it and derives benefits from it. This emphasis is retained in the Roman missal in the prayer for the feast of Corpus Christi:

O Lord, we beseech thee, be pleased to grant unto thy Church the gifts of unity and peace, which by these offered gifts are mystically signified: through Jesus Christ our Lord . . .<sup>14</sup>

There are at least two broad therapeutic benefits which are ours in Holy Communion: we offer a *sacrifice* in which

<sup>13</sup> Karl Menninger, *Love Against Hate* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1943), p. 278.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted by Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Dacre Press, 1945), p. 248.

we experience expiation for hostility and guilt, and we receive loving *communion* in which the healing of disrupted and broken lives is possible. As we have noted frequently in this study, hostility and guilt are two inseparable parts of man's distorted existence. They must be dealt with in realistic terms, or else they continue to play their role in the unconscious. To give them up is, in a sense, to give up a part of the self, and this can be accomplished only when there is a shift of the whole personality from anxiety to Christian faith. It is the goal and purpose of self-examination, confession, and the preparation that must precede one's coming to Holy Communion to secure this profound change. Here, before the altar, such a sacrifice requires a willingness to give up the self with its hostility and guilt, in order to be made whole again. The benefit of the sacrament is real only when the sacrifice exacts a genuine offering. The gifts of the holy sacrifice symbolize the offering of the self wholly, even as Christ offered Himself. Here one is brought to the deepest realization of those words that are the very heart of the Gospel:

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it (Matthew 16:25, AV).

#### SUMMARY

Basically, the Eucharist makes real the experience of atonement (or at-one-ment) in the Christian Church. The profound benefit of the sacrament is "at-oneness" with Christ and, through Him, with oneself and with the world. Where the experience of Holy Communion is a reality, man is in fact no longer a slave to alienation and anxiety. In that moment the unqualified love of God and the spontaneity of living are his. He is at one not only within himself, but with angels and archangels and with the whole Creation that shares that fullness of the glory of God. This is God's answer

to the tragedy and brokenness of our lives. This is healing for our deepest fear, for as the poet Donne has said,

Who can fear death this night  
That hath had the Lord of life  
In his hand today?

## LIVING THROUGH ANXIETY

Anxiety is the condition of our living. It is a part of our freedom and of our striving for selfhood. It is tragic only in the sense that in existence it tends to become the driving force behind our distorted lives of sin and guilt, anger and alienation. Christianity is a way of living through anxiety by faith. Its locus is the community of those who have responded to the saving act of God in Christ. The mystery of that "blessed company" is its gift of faith for anxiety, where faith restores and love heals the wounds of anxiety. No man lives beyond anxiety; but every man lives within the reach of God's recovery of man. A familiar hymn in Christendom, *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, invokes the Holy Spirit, whose gifts include "blessed unction from above"—the only healing for man's disfigurement. The petition begins at the right place and asks for the right gift:

Anoint and cheer our soiled face  
With the abundance of Thy grace.

The soiled face of modern man looks anxiously for peace where there is no peace, for health and salvation in gods that have no capacity to heal or to save. He cannot live without his civilization, and certainly one of his most serious problems is learning to live within it. More and more modern man is forced into loneliness and isolation, and deeper anxiety is the unfailing component of that isolation. The primal anxiety of existence and neurotic anxiety are fused in the process of living, with the total result that life

becomes driven by a relentless compulsion that defies effective control.

Man is anxious, and the deepest sting is his fear that his suffering is ultimately meaningless. His anxiety is compounded of separation from God and of the distortions of an exacting and anxiety-ridden environment. It leaves him with the conviction that existence itself is painful and meaningless. Man cries out in the dark night of his soul for deliverance from this torment. He finds little to assuage his pain in the limited world of secularism; and even his worship of God may be frustrated by a diminished horizon that is a part of his anxious self-concern.

#### **RECOVERY OF THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT**

The answer to man's isolation is beginning to appear in the modern world's recovery of the life of the spirit. I use the word *recovery* because the idea of spirit (in the sense of breath, or wind, or energy), as the invisible basis of life, was a universal assumption in the ancient world. Both the writers of Genesis and the ancient Greek philosophers shared this assumption. There was no necessary dichotomy between spirit and matter in that ancient view, nor was the spirit confined in its manifestation to intelligence or ethereal phenomenon. The word spirit has always been man's way of designating vital force in action. It cannot be confined or limited, yet it finds expression in all creation. While some of the ancients actually identified spirit with God, most could have given assent to the statement: In spirit we live and move, and have our being.

The modern world of secularism, by implication if not by intent, has ignored this larger life of the spirit. It has tended to confine reality to physical matter and to disregard the wider implications of spiritual life. In our culture this has resulted in a distorted emphasis upon empirical facts that have been disengaged from the spiritual and religious

aspect of truth and value. Academic education has moved more and more in the direction of the accumulation of facts, while making little effort to relate these facts to ultimate meaning and truth. The image of our life thus produced has prompted some writers to call ours "a cut flower culture." This disjunctive, spectatorial attitude is one of the reasons why modern man is suffering from "a case of nerves!" Nerve ends must bear the burden of our contradictory existence if empiricism is the limit of our view of reality.

But there is a stirring in educational circles—indeed, in the whole realm of science—a tendency to look for correlative truth and value in the total area of man's living. A revolution has taken place in physical science with the removal of the division between energy and matter in man's view of reality. The Einstein equation,  $E = mc^2$ , means that energy and matter are perpetually interchangeable. This understanding calls for an entirely new, dynamic approach to truth: energy is matter in motion. The old Cartesian dualism is inadequate. Any view of reality must take into account this rediscovered note of unity and wholeness.

We have observed a similar revolution in psychosomatic medicine, where the spiritual and motivational side of man's life is related once more to his total functioning. Perhaps the most crucial factor in modern man's recovery of the spirit has been his excruciating loneliness and disintegration, as he has tried, apart from the life of the spirit, to withstand the blows of modern history. In war and the separations necessitated by it, in prison camps, and in states subjected to secret police methods, the recovery of the spirit and the spiritual life has become a necessity. The writer has heard of a small group of men that met regularly in Germany throughout the Hitlerite regime in the very teeth of Gestapo vigilance. Their only communication with one another was to read aloud the New Testament, the works of Goethe and Shakespeare, and to hear the music of Bach, but by this

they preserved the life of the spirit and were saved from despair.

Recovery of spirit is also recovery of wholeness. Throughout this study, we have noted the deep concern for wholeness in every approach to the problem of understanding human behavior. To experience release from anxiety is to recover a part of the personality that has been lost. To move in the direction of recovered faculties is again to approach wholeness—that state in which the recovered self relates spontaneously on every level of human existence. The idea of wholeness in modern thought conceives of man, neither as the sum of his integral parts nor as a physical body with spiritual faculties, but as a living entity whose thinking, willing, and acting are all expressions of his total being. Psychoanalysis has used this approach in order to understand the function of anxiety in man and to assist him in the recovery of health. The beginning of recovered wholeness is dramatically illustrated in the case of the woman whom Frieda Fromm-Reichmann describes in *Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy*.<sup>1</sup> This patient had failed to respond to ordinary therapy and had withdrawn to the extent of absolute muteness. Still the doctor visited her every day and continued to offer her a genuine relationship that demanded no particular response. Then one day, the doctor's charge blurted out, "I don't know why you keep trying. I'm not interested!" Negative as this seems, the therapist was encouraged because the patient had spoken, and she suggested that they continue on her (the doctor's) faith. A year and a half later, when she was really on the road to recovery, the patient recalled this experience as the turning point in her illness. Dr. Fromm-Reichmann had succeeded in convincing the woman that her personal interest was genuine and given without condition. The patient was able

<sup>1</sup> Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, *Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), pp. 110 ff.

to respond to that gift and to begin the crucial recovery of her wholeness.

It is important to note that in this case the happy outcome began with the quality of the relation offered to the patient. The physician gave more than the cold stones of efficient techniques. Her relation to this woman was characterized by a spiritual attitude that made it possible to give an unencumbered gift. This is how the Kingdom of God comes, not with fanfare and trumpets, but in that spiritual meeting in which creation is quietly restored. For the Christian the meaning of life is spiritual. It is discovered in relationship. The heart of the Christian message is the proclamation that God, the Spirit, is being made manifest in the realities of this world as He is supremely manifested in the person of Christ. The rediscovery of the Spirit by modern man—the recovery of the fullness and meaning of life in real meeting—is something of a recapitulation of the experience of the early Church. St. Paul discovered that the Spirit is found where the fruits of the Spirit are found—in love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. It is the Spirit who shapes and forms the new man beyond the ravages of anxiety. Recovered wholeness is another fruit of the Spirit.

#### PSYCHOTHERAPY AND CHRISTIAN FAITH

It should be clear, from what we have said, that psychotherapy and Christian faith have some common goals. Both are concerned with removing the blocks that keep man from self-realization. Both deal with the experience of anxiety and are concerned with providing relaxation of that anxiety in a new reformation of the whole person. Where there is neurotic distortion of interpersonal relations, the experience and techniques of psychotherapy may be necessary before Christian symbols can be meaningful. Psychoanalysis stands with the prophetic voice of the Hebraic-Christian tradition in challenging man to look to the real motives by which

he lives. Indeed, it is possible that God has raised up this voice of scrutiny in order to expose the false god made in man's own image. In that sense Nietzsche was right when he declared that God is dead. The old domesticated half gods must leave before the real God comes. In the business of expelling the half gods, psychotherapy has played a vital role. It has asked the same questions that Isaiah asked:

To whom then will you liken God,  
or what likeness compare with him? (*Isaiah 40:18*).

Man in his anxiety attempts to possess God, to shape Him as an idol and to use Him as a shield from the cold winds of reality. But God will not be possessed nor used. He hides from man. He forsakes him who would use Him. He will not become an object, for He is the God who specifically forbids images. As J. H. Oldham has said, ". . . we cannot talk about God. We can only talk to Him. Where God is concerned, the only language open to us is prayer."<sup>2</sup>

While psychoanalysis is an aid in exposing false gods, it is limited as a total view of life. Techniques that provide greater knowledge of the self cannot be elevated into schemes of salvation. Any science that has succumbed to the temptation of scientism (the elevation of relative truth to absolute truth) is simply another form of idolatry—the adoration of the mind by the mind. Psychotherapy should not attempt, nor should it be expected to attempt, the answering of religious questions. The task of psychotherapy lies in the direction of assisting and strengthening man's use of his own capacities to the end that his life may be more satisfying. Religious faith, on the other hand, is concerned with relating man at every level of his being to that ultimate Reality, "in whose service is perfect freedom."

The methods of psychotherapy have helped man to understand himself and his own struggle. They are means

<sup>2</sup>J. H. Oldham, *Life Is Commitment* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1952), p. 47.

of restoring the relation between motive and action. These same methods have produced rich insights about the way in which culture and conditioning shape personality. By analysis we are now able to chart the effect of environment. Even so, we should not permit this analytic attitude to obscure the fact that human beings fight their decisive battles within themselves. To say that man is largely influenced by his environment, is not to say that he is simply a passive object. The fact that he is able to assess in some measure his own involvement in the culture is evidence that man is still man, not a stick or stone. In the end, it is man's deciding that makes sense or chaos out of his relation to his world.

Secular psychiatry, although it would replace religion, will continue to be disturbed by man's guilt beyond guilt feelings and man's sin beyond neurotic aggression or compliance. The brokenness and deep disturbance in man's nature that is indicated by manifestations of sin and guilt cannot be healed simply by growth. Nor is human forgiveness strong enough to break the cycle of anger and retribution that reaches back through the generations to the origin of existence. That wound needs healing, beyond medical arts and beyond human therapy, in God, the Creator, in whose love alone man is restored. This therapy depends upon death and resurrection, judgment, repentance, forgiveness and newness of being in faith and love. Christ warned his disciples, "Without me you can do nothing." I take that to mean that all our striving, without faith in Christ, leads but to negation, to nothingness. Here we confront the tragedy of modern man, who is, as one novelist put it, "too sophisticated to believe in God and too frightened to believe in nothing."

From the Christian viewpoint, man's isolation and diminished living is a darkness that only the strong love of God can dispel. Within that love he may live not only by means of insight and understanding, but also through faith,

a faith that re-evaluates the meaning of existence in terms of that love.

But where does one begin? The prophet Hosea counseled a fear-tormented Israel to break up her fallow ground and to seek Jehovah again. Anxiety lies beneath the surface of man's life; deep furrows and toilsome work are exacted of one who would know and answer the anxiety of existence in faith. For that requires, first of all, knowing the faith one actually lives by—the real motives that issue in one's way of life. The searching and the being searched that are required if a man is to break up his fallow ground, can be endured only within loving relations; and for the Christian, within the grace of God. It is painful to learn the truth about oneself and to be renewed beyond that knowledge. Nicodemus learned from Christ that it is like being born again with travail and pain.

The hazard involved in searching the self is deeply personal. Just as the retreat from life is an escape from personal awareness, so also to turn and face life and one's self will involve heightened and painful self awareness. Perhaps this is why so many people are content with only a mild form of Christianity. The plumbing of their depths has frightened them away from the real thing. But it is just this fear that has transformed "mild Christianity" into a demon religion in many people for whom to "be Christian" is to be rigidly proper and sterile and to exchange the Christian truth about man for a fatuous sentimentality. Genuine faith is renewed only by praying continuously the words of the Psalmist:

Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart;  
prove me, and examine my thoughts (Psalm 139:23).

#### **DEMONIC POSSESSION IN MODERN MAN**

Biblical faith is a continuing challenge to the idolatries of man. It is forever seeking the ground of men's hearts,

trying the faith by which they live. The false gods of ancient Israel and the demon possessions of modern man are brothers under the skin. They share a common weakness: they have no power to save. Indeed, the writer of Judges voiced the prophetic challenge to all idolatry with these words: "Go and cry to the gods whom you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress" (Judges 10:14). False gods, however, cannot deliver in time of distress or anxiety.

The anxiety of existence demands a faith. Worship in some form is a necessity of living. Whether or not he worships consciously, man is the kind of animal that must have meaning and ultimate concerns; even if his ultimate concern is to deny meaning. It is obvious that not all religion is included under the heading of "religion." Indeed, for many sophisticated moderns, indifference to organized religion is a fetish. Look behind that façade of unconcern and one discovers a frantic search for salvation—for a god that can save. Polytheism was the conscious problem of the ancient world, and it is the unconscious problem of our age. In the necessity of living through anxiety, man seeks the god of his salvation; and the crucial question is whether he worships idols or that God alone, who saves him by restoring him to genuine freedom and selfhood in relatedness.

Christ addressed himself to the demon possessions of his day. These false gods that took possession of and tormented the souls of many were driven out in the name of God's healing purpose. Here was beginning the mighty works of the age to come:

But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons,  
then the kingdom of God has come upon you (Luke  
11:20).

The demon possessions of modern man are the false "worships" that operate beneath the conscious surface of

his life as his answer to anxiety. These function as idols in that they demand total commitment in return for the false promise of salvation. The claims of these false worships are anonymous and not immediately evident to man, but sincere reflection and self-searching is more than likely to reveal the signs of their presence.

One sign is perfectionism, a way of life in which a person is ruthlessly intolerant of every mark of weakness. It is as if the victim had said to himself, "Without absolute perfection I cannot abide myself or others." This frantic striving to keep on top leads man inexorably to an alienation from self, as he progressively reduces the area of his living in order to maintain the fiction of impeccability. For such a person, the Sermon on the Mount and the Christian counsels to perfection lose their relation to the Kingdom of God, where judgment is joined with forgiveness; instead, they become a new moralism, rather than the basis of new covenant relation. It seems obvious that rigid perfectionism destroys the possibility of genuine relations within the self or with others. A perfectionistic mother or father cannot help being more concerned with proving the fiction that their children are superior than with really knowing and loving the children for themselves.

"Drivenness" is another sign of false worship. To be driven is to move at the impulse and command of forces alien to oneself, to act because one is forced to act, and thereby to lose one's freedom and selfhood. The loss of freedom and selfhood is always the occasion of anger; and the amount of anger in our common life is in some measure the drivenness of modern living. Karen Horney has a brilliant analysis of this aspect of our culture in her last book, *Neurosis and Human Growth*. There she traces out the manifold ways in which the destructive "search for glory" becomes the compulsive drive that robs all life of fulfillment. A wish or a need, understandable in itself, becomes a claim,

a tyrannous claim, dominating the life of its victim. The perfectionist, for instance, is driven to fulfill the claims of his rigid conscience.

But our submission to alien forces is more strikingly evident in our slavery to routine, our uneasy and uncreative use of leisure, and our inability to be alone with ourselves. A person with whom the writer was counseling experienced this feeling in a dream wherein she found herself on a ferris wheel that was "forever going up and down." These descriptive words bear significant relation to the reply of Satan in the story of Job, when the Lord asked him, "Whence have you come?"

From going to and fro on the earth,  
and from walking up and down on it (Job 1:7).

Demonic life is a dreary walking up and down the ways of this world exactly because it is motivated by a worship that knows nothing of "quietness and confidence." Demonic life is cut off from the source of renewal, from God Himself.

False worship ultimately reveals itself as a worship of the self that is at the same time contempt of the self. Man's essential relation to God in creation (the basis of his self acceptance) is broken in self-idolatry, and he hates himself precisely because he cannot save himself. Every idolatry is a "proud worship," as well as a vain worship. It is measured in brokenness and destruction for countless lives. Perhaps this fact lends weight to those words in the *Magnificat*:

He hath showed strength with his arm;  
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their  
hearts.

Idolatry arises not merely from impaired human relations, but from a broken relation between man's "I" and the "Thou" of God. It is this profound disruption that reduces man to the stature of a thing that must convert every other person into a thing, in the fruitless effort to

prove his own worth. Friendship, love, and community become possessions that, like every other object possessed, are used in his own unsuccessful search for justification. The futility of that search, while apart from God, issues in the anger that man feels against himself, which, when translated into destructive aggression and hostility, becomes a characteristic mark of this age. The ambivalence remains: self worship is also contempt of the self.

The temptation of idolatry is renewed with every generation. It is as deep in man as his own doubt, and as subtle as his pride. Only the form changes. Where yesterday men were tempted, in the picturesque translation of Moffatt of a verse from Psalm 106, "to barter God, their glory, for the image of an ox that munches grass"; today they barter God for an idol that their science makes, an image that may be only a little more refined. Idolatry enters man through pride; and for modern man, the words of Christ that if the eye is not sound, the whole body is full of darkness, goes to the heart of the matter. Man's capitulation to idolatry is foreshadowed in his ambivalence; his purity of heart is already corrupted because, as Kierkegaard put it, he does not will to be one thing: to be himself in the eyes of God. With this pervasive aspect of the temptation to idolatry in mind, we propose now to bring it into focus through the three classic temptations of Christ (Matthew 4).

In the first of these temptations, the devil issues the challenge, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." Jesus answers:

It is written,

"Man shall not live by bread alone,

but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

This incident occurs during Jesus' fast in the wilderness, when the need for food was heightened by His self-imposed discipline. It represents the temptation to give oneself over

to bodily satisfactions. The vital desires of man's life—food, sex and self-expression are not evil in themselves. They become demonic when man attempts to live by his vitality alone. Here is an idolatry widely encountered in our age.

The temptation to worship oneself as vitality is evident in our preoccupation with retaining youth, in our consuming interest in sex, food, and drink, and in that busy activity that seems to mount with our years. Let us be reminded that this idolatry is not confined to the more dramatic sins of a Don Juan or the pleasures of the primrose path! The drive behind these expressions is the same as that which keeps man forever on the move, forever seeking new conquests, although never finding the satisfactions he expects in his actual living. Who has not encountered the pathetically "good" people of our community, who live for achievements' sake, believing that "actions speak louder than words," or that "nothing succeeds like success," and whose every achievement leaves them more empty and nearer defeat. Sometimes such people are called "do gooders," but those who do the name calling can measure their own involvement in this demonic possession by looking into their own homes, where too often families are split by resentment with sons and daughters even hating their parents and their "good works" because anxiety in the service of busyness has robbed them of the parent they have never known.

Job discovered that to live is to know that there is "a warfare to man upon earth":

I am not at ease,  
nor am I quiet;  
I have no rest;  
but trouble comes (Job 3:26).

The temptation that man faces in this inescapable trouble is to take it upon himself busily to avoid it, to live sensu-

ously, to "live to the limit," rather than living through his trouble in a faith-love relation to God. Job found no other answer to his problems, but he did come to a relationship with God whom he now knew in a new way. He put it this way:

I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,  
but now my eye sees thee . . . (Job 42:5).

The anxiety behind the worship of the self, as vitality, is betrayed by the constant desire to prove oneself. Frequently, this takes the form of the anxious pursuit of "rules to live by." There is an episode in the life of Christ about which it is told that He was confronted by the bald demand for a sure formula. In the Gospel of St. John (6:28-29), the people are pictured, as asking: "What must we do, to be doing the work of God?" His answer must have been a disappointment to His hearers, as it is a disappointment to everyone who seeks to save himself by his own works:

This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.

The one thing required of the person busily engaged in proving himself, and the most difficult thing for him to give, is that he put his trust in the trustworthiness of God in Jesus Christ. For this sacrifice one must learn that nothing he can do or say will suffice when meeting and responding to God in Christ is the requirement. Such a sacrifice means death to the anxious desire for security in works. It can also mean new birth through confidence in Christ, who has been proved once and for all.

In the second temptation, Satan speaks from the high mountain and the vista of the kingdoms with all their glory:

All these will I give you,  
if you will fall down and worship me.

Jesus replies:

Begone, Satan! for it is written,  
“You shall worship the Lord your God  
and him only shall you serve.”

The temptation to live by the power and possession of things stands behind much of the self-idolatry and self-contempt in the children of this age. It is as if a man had said to himself in his innermost being, “I’ll never get by on my own. I must please people and bribe them to like me!” At heart, this is a rejection of the givenness of one’s self. It is rejection of God. One does not trust either the self God has given or God Himself. Hence, this man is caught in the frantic pursuit of possessions and services by which he hopes to keep others obligated to him. The paradox of self-worship and self-contempt is the spur behind the adulation of power in man’s life.

The temptations of power and possessions are quite evident in the rearing of our children. One learns rather early in life to place a high value on the possession of things or on the faculty for being useful to or for impressing others. Thus, the talent for manipulation becomes the means whereby one seeks satisfactions in life. But the spoiled child and the immature adult both suffer the frustrating experience that manipulation of others brings no genuine satisfaction in living. And their suffering is more than a frustration. It is a reflection of the tragic role of a sin that exchanges man’s fundamental relation to God and to others for the worship of self, a self-worship that takes the form of power for control. The radical claims of God must be set against this idolatry with the emphatic emphasis upon the words: *“and him only shalt thou serve.”*

The worship of the self as power has been dramatically illustrated in the political history of modern man. But this large canvas may obscure the more intimate role that this idolatry plays in our common life. Faust is a true child of modern history in that he gave up his soul for the knowledge

that would enable him to control others. Insofar as science has become the object of worship and the means of domination, it has followed the Faustian course. Indeed, instances of the temptation to give oneself over to the pursuit of power need not be sought beyond the boundaries of daily interpersonal relations. Every counselor is concerned with families where anxiety in the service of power has tempted the parents to dominate their children's lives with tragic results that are recognizable in broken marriages and unfulfilled lives. Manipulation either by strength or by weakness tends to reduce human relations to "I-it," where the human element disappears. In *Mrs. McThing* the playwright advances the theme that human relations cannot be walled in and protected. To treat another person as a "stick" is to become a "stick" oneself. The prohibition against covetousness in the Bible seems relevant here. It is more than an injunction against desiring a neighbor's goods. It is the recognition that man's idolatry reduces both his neighbor and himself to the status of goods and chattels. Covetousness is a vanity through which man tries to save himself by possessiveness, and its course leads inexorably to his destruction and to that of his neighbor.

In the third temptation, the devil transported Christ to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple.

If you are the Son of God, he jeered, throw yourself down; for it is written,

"He will give his angels charge of you,"  
and

"On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you strike your foot against a stone!"

Jesus answered him:

Again it is written,

"You shall not tempt the Lord your God."

It is to be noted that the devil quotes Scripture here to support his proposition! The temptation to use God for

our own purposes is the perennial attraction of magic. It is, as someone has aptly remarked, to make religion our God, rather than God our religion. It is to appropriate the prerogatives of God for ourselves in self-worship.

The lure of magic is very strong, and it is not easy to discern. There is always a chance that it stands behind our turning to religion. The crucial question is whether or not our worship frees us for a more spontaneous participation in life. The use of piety to solve personal problems may and frequently does include an attempt to bend God to our own will. The unconscious motive is evident here in a rigid anxiousness about "doing things just the right way" and in the anger that inevitably accompanies the failure of this effort to coerce God. There are countless people in our parishes, as well as in the secular congregations of community life, who are forever ready to demand of their "priests" that they make new gods when they find that the one God can not be ordered about. This is the perennial demand of a people impatient in waiting upon God. So it was with the Hebrews:

Up, make us gods, who shall go before us . . . (Exodus 32:1).

The temptation and the pressure to transform religion into magic emphasizes the necessity that priests be not only pastors, but also prophets. The prophetic word stands against every worship that takes the "name of the Lord God in vain."

The insights of modern psychology can prove helpful in our understanding of the real function that our religion serves and in clearing the way for the work of genuine faith. The hospital chaplain encounters a patient whose recovery from a simple physical injury has been impeded by emotional turmoil. In conversation he learns that the patient has assumed a religious attitude that serves as a rigid cover for feelings of guilt, derived from childhood

problems. The answer to the patient's need goes deeper than simply encouraging her to give up her unnecessary guilt feelings. It lies in the direction of helping her to find the God who, although He searches and judges us, also loves us infinitely. It is God alone, who can destroy the false patterns of religion that we fashion to meet our mistaken needs. It is God alone, who saves.

The words of the devil suggest why the temptation to false religion seems to be so deeply rooted in human behavior: man's belief in his right to be kept from hurt or harm. This attitude persists in Christianity despite the centrality of the crucifixion. It is a false belief that arrogantly assumes that God may be used for the protection of one person or group over others. Jonah represents this temptation in the Old Testament. He was sent to save the Ninevites, but because he believed that God was the exclusive possession of the Hebrews, he performed the task with some reluctance! The Ninevites' subsequent repentance brought no joy to Jonah. It, like the loss of his shady covering, infuriated him. As he sat "angry even unto death," he was shown the fundamental fallacy of his religion. He had hoarded his God as his own possession, just as he had appropriated the gourd for shade. He had labored for neither. But his own grief in the loss of the gourd is but a very pale reflection of God's infinite concern for the people of Ninevah. There is both judgment and grace in this story: judgment on the attempt to keep religion as a magic charm, grace in the infinite love of God for those that know Him not.

The insistence upon the right to be kept from hurt or harm, whether it be in the individual or in a people, is a symptom of false worship. Its center of gravity is well illustrated by the complaint of a mother whose daughter was having difficulty, the complaint that "God would let just this happen to my child." If these words do not seem widely representative, one need only reflect that many people think of their church as a club in which, as long as

dues are paid and requirements reasonably observed, the heavenly powers are obligated to protect the members from misfortune. Needless to say, such organized idolatry is always breaking down. God does not bargain with man. His grace is freely given and must be freely received. Man may always enter into loving communion with the reconciling God in Christ. In such a relation he possesses the courage to be, even in disaster.

The false worships of modern man recall again the vital significance of the fundamental Hebrew-Christian belief: one God worshipped through love in heart, soul, and mind. The false gods are expelled when the one God comes in truth. But the demon possessions of man are never exorcized except through much prayer and fasting, and ultimately only by the finger of God. That God has acted redeemerly at this crucial juncture is the basic Christian affirmation. Jesus is the Christ! Man's recovery is accomplished in that decisive action. It remains for man to claim by faith the victory over idolatries that God has wrought in the event of Christ. That event is more than an idea, more than "a cunningly devised fable," even more than a fervent hope. It is an eye witness event, something that happened in history. It is a living reality that continues to happen in the flesh and blood witness of the community of the Holy Spirit.

Secular psychiatry is also concerned with the removal of the demons that enslave man; but the spiritual vacuity that results when this is attempted apart from God may, as in Christ's parable of the swept and garnished house, invite seven more deadly spirits, so that the last state of the man is worse than the first. For the Christian reconciliation takes place in a community of relations sustained by the Holy Spirit. This is symbolized in the great affirmations of Christianity which begin: "I believe in . . .," "Our Father who . . ." The Bible and the Church are woven into the patterns of life, into the stuff of history. Within this living reality,

there is present the hope of driving out the enslaving idolatries that the anxiety of existence spawns.

#### HOLY SPIRIT COMMUNITY

While spirit is universal, the message of the New Testament is that God has come with new and abiding presence in the Holy Spirit. He dwells in the community that rejoices in His redeeming power. As we have seen, man apart from some kind of saving community destroys both himself and the spirit that is within him, "having no hope and without God in the world." The loss of real community is one of the deeper reasons why this age is so involved in running away from self. Modern man is without a home. He is cut off, belonging nowhere. Yet he is not beyond God. His final loneliness is met by God in the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. There is strength here, and the courage to face and to recover the lost self. It is obvious that self-searching is intolerable apart from some kind of community. Even the self-searching of psychotherapy must proceed within community. The deeper purpose and end of all self-knowledge is the rediscovery of man's relation to God. For that a man must turn and face himself, and the strength of the community of grace reaches out to help. In the decisive moment, however, man must decide, and in deciding for or against God, his freedom is revealed again. Pascal has said, "He who has created us without our aid cannot save us without it."<sup>8</sup>

Man's recovery of himself, his recovery of wholeness, is accomplished within community. For the Christian, that community is the gift of the Holy Spirit; it precedes man and enables him to turn from alienation to a new life in relationship. Freedom is a curse unless man has the courage to use it creatively. Humanism would seek that courage in man himself. Mysticism looks for it outside of man. In the

<sup>8</sup> Quoted by Denzil G. M. Patrick, *Pascal and Kierkegaard* (London: Lutterworth, 1947), I, 181.

biblical view, the courage necessary for freedom is based upon a faith-trust relation to God. It is both within man as the restored image of God and beyond him in the being of God. It is realized through man's participation in the Holy Spirit community.

In the biblical view, man is enabled to use his freedom only insofar as he remains in a vital faith relation to God. Freedom is neither an autonomous possession of man, nor is it a capricious gift, doled out by God when man is "good." Like Ezekiel, man is unable to stand upon his own feet and speak his own words until the spirit of God enters his receptive heart, and then he is enabled to stand and to speak. Thus by the spirit of God, man's freedom and selfhood are strengthened. Through the spirit he has the courage to be himself in the eyes of God. The prophets were thus enabled to speak to a people that were hostile to their message. And St. Paul prayed that God would grant his fellow Christians at Ephesus

. . . to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love . . . may be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:16-19).

The fullness of man's freedom and selfhood is realized in relation to God. Modern psychiatry has rightly insisted that man cannot be more responsible than his freedom permits, and that he will accept responsibility to the degree that his freedom is realized. In a community of slaves it is unrealistic to expect man to act responsibly. But in a community where men are no longer slaves, but brothers, and free by faith, the community of responsibility becomes a possibility. In the community of faith man recovers his selfhood in relation to God, and he is *free for freedom*. The characteristic action of the Christian community throughout the ages has been *eucharist*, thanksgiving, for the freedom

of the new man in Christ. The liberty of Christian man is the product of faith beyond law. Wherever Christianity has been led into the byway of moralism and salvation by "ought," it has destroyed the meaning of Christian freedom. Man's *freedom for freedom* springs from his faith-trust relation to God; it cannot be produced by moral pronouncements.

Faith must involve more than assent to a set of ideas. It means a life of trust in the larger community of the Holy Spirit. In that wide fellowship worship and prayer are the means of communication. Everyone prays in the sense that life is a constant dialogue with the ultimate concerns. But prayer, too, has its idols, which are a part of the false worships of man. We have seen how these idolatries limit and isolate man. Genuine prayer breaks through the crusty, fallow surfaces of our individual separation and draws us into the common life of God's people. Worship is fulfilled when man, in adoration of God, brings His whole creation before Him in joyful praise and thanksgiving. Christianity in a way of redeemed relations within the Holy Spirit community.

For the early Christians, *Koinonia*, their fellowship, was the means of their access to the Holy Spirit. As they entered into that community of faith, they were caught up into the new life of God's astonishing power. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was shared by many who then exercised the gifts of the Holy Spirit and "continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42, AV). The mystery of that *Koinonia* was its note of strength in sharing. The Holy Spirit comes through participation, not in isolation. It is a gift realized only in community.

The Church (*ekklesia*), as it developed, was made up of those who had been called out of the world into *Koinonia*. In the New Testament, membership in that body is by baptism, which signifies incorporation into the living body

of Christ that is the people of God. The gift of the Holy Spirit is embodied in the Church, which is the locus of God's redeeming work. St. Paul reminded the Corinthians that "by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body . . ." (I Cor. 12:13). The essence of the Christian message is that God has visited and redeemed his people, who now live from faith to faith in the "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." Lest this be misunderstood as a prideful claim for "one of the churches," it should be added that the Church in this definition embraces more than the visible church. With St. Paul we must remember that we know only "in part" and that the ultimate judgment about the boundaries of God's Church belong to Him alone. It is a peculiar form of ecclesiastical idolatry that presumes that any man or church can usurp the seat of judgment that belongs to God only. But this we do know: that where the Church continues in the Apostle's teaching and fellowship, where the Bible is read and the Word of God is received, where the sacraments are prayerfully observed and the faith is joyfully proclaimed, there the Christian experience is possible. And it is possible only in relation to such a community, for individualism and basic Christianity are opposite poles.

Modern man may have understandable hesitancy in accepting the Church he knows. From history, he has learned of its role as an agent of authoritarianism emphasizing doctrine and its acceptance as more important than vital faith-trust relations. More recently, he has seen the Church become an escape for those that would be relieved of the necessity of facing the facts of his world as it is. These sad facts cannot be minimized; they are true. But the early Church came into her own in a hostile world, not by running away from life, but by becoming in fact man's true spiritual home, the place where he could live with his world. And something of the vigor of that early Church is stirring again within Christianity as she learns that she lives in an alien world. This is evidenced by the open missionary mindedness

which is gladly facing the facts of this world. An illustration of this open mindedness is the effort of the Church to relate her sacramental life to the wholeness of man's being, as that reality has been recovered by psychosomatic medicine. A happy sign evident in many communions is the recovery of the heart of the family-parish community in corporate worship and the rediscovered relevancy of biblical faith to the actual predicament of man. The facts discovered by modern science are the revelation of God's truth when, in faith, they are rewoven into the total fabric of His world. This is a crucial task of the Church in every age.

One of the ironies of modern history is that, in his enthusiasm to throw off the restraints of the Church, man has given himself over to the false gods of this culture, whose voracious demands afford him neither peace nor community. Secular loneliness is inescapable. The spirit of secularism hauls down the flag of Christianity in the name of individualism. It lowers the horizon of faith. It leads to isolation and despair. Even in his collectivist utopias, modern man discovers not real community, but, as one observer has put it, "atomism packed tight."

Anxious and alone man stands outside the Church and demands "moral values" that can be pressed into easy-to-take capsules. His troubled mind seeks those fruits of Christianity that he cannot have, unless he is willing to take his place in the life-giving plant, which is the Church. The gifts of the Holy Spirit will belong to man again when he comes out of his barricaded isolation into the community of faith and expectancy. He that stands outside and demands salvation will never know the spontaneity of a love that rejoices in hope and is "patient in tribulation."

The people of God are called into community, and the Church is that community. Its fellowship is the place where man may recover his lost humanity. The common proclamation of faith in the Apostles' Creed involves taking a stand in that relation (*I believe in . . .*) where the Holy

Catholic Church, as well as the Holy Spirit, the forgiveness of sins and the communion of Saints are affirmed together. Here the deepest needs of man are met and fulfilled. Here the supreme fruit of sacred fellowship, *agape*, may become a living reality. Christian faith does not end with the forgiveness of sins nor with relief from anxiety. It incorporates man into an ongoing transcendent community of the forgiven and the forgiving, where in moments of faith and love he lives beyond anxiety. Thus the Church through her life and sacraments provides healing for the tragic anxiety of existence. The Holy Spirit community is man's "native land," his home, where he recovers his lost wholeness and lives through anxiety.

#### B E Y O N D D E S P A I R

It is important to emphasize that the Christian way is one of living through anxiety, rather than of attempting to escape it. The goal of life is not "peace of mind," but faith and love that live through anxiety in the peace of God. Like the early Christians, we "must through much tribulation" enter the Kingdom of God. The facts of life teach us that we shall have to be able to endure uncertainty. It is a hard lesson to learn, because despair and the loss of meaning stand behind every uncertainty when our perspective is "this-world-only." There is an interesting paradox here. We, the children of this world, are fond of thinking that we are entirely self-sufficient; but we flee from tensions and are not above accepting the answers magic offers to our problems. It is significant that people that have rejected, as too fanciful, fairy tales in which love and perseverance and grace are virtues, have instead turned to the heroes of the comic strip, radio, and television, heroes who quite often are those that succeed by superhuman, indeed magic, powers.

So far as faith is concerned, man is not a tentative animal. He must live by some faith and in a kind of community, even though both may produce only a wearisome existence.

Christian realism is skeptical about the faith and community of modern man that promises so much and yields so little. It points to his false worships and feeble attempts at community and recalls the warning of Jeremiah that "slight healing" and cries of "peace, peace" leave festering sores that require deep healing.

The lesson of despair must not be evaded: The things that belong to man's peace require that he see himself in the light of despair, before he can know the new life in God's reconciling grace. "Weep not for me," Jesus told the women of Jerusalem, "but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke 23:28, AV). Despair is not lost, if it brings one to the need of redemption. The secret of despair is that we are not left alone. Otherwise, why cry out to God? It restores us again to the realities of life in which man is man, not a shining god. Unless his faith is more than a veneer of self-satisfaction to cover his despair, he will be forever driven to seek the meaning of his life in false gods. There is but one faith that can drive out these demons, one faith that, in the face of despair and meaninglessness, provides man with as good a reason for living as for dying. This is the Christian faith which lies beyond despair and which, in loving community, makes the threats man must endure the schoolmasters to bring him closer to God.

One of these threats is the reality of guilt beyond imagined guilt. To live is to become involved in a cycle of sin and estrangement that can only lead to despairing guilt, unless it can somehow be undone. Goethe has said that human action always involves a degree of unjustness: "only the spectator can preserve his conscience." The rigorous claims of the New Testament are meant to drive man from his citadel of anxious self-concern to restored relationship with God. Psychiatry has sometimes claimed that these demands of Christianity are too great. They lay impossible burdens upon man. This charge is justified when Christianity is viewed simply as a moral exercise. Here the Sermon on

the Mount becomes either a new legalism or the occasion for mass self-deception regarding its fulfillment. Those that reduce the faith to the Beatitudes or “the Golden Rule” only should take the time required to read the Gospels in which these statements appear: It is hardly an accident that Christ’s Sermon on the Mount ends with an admonition against anxiety, which is a warning to those who busily flee from its profound searching and a counsel to seek first the Kingdom of God where relationship precedes and nurtures the moral fruits of the Kingdom.

The claims of Christianity are intolerable apart from the grace and forgiveness of God. Taken alone these claims serve only to drive man deeper into despair. Indeed, the weight of unresolved guilt is another factor that contributes to the loneliness and diminished living from which modern man suffers. It is here that the “Christian” voice is mingled with the pagan, as they cry out in chorus, “Could it not somehow be undone?” Guilt unforgiven produces an anxious self-concern that is the epitome of sin. As Christians, we must remember that forgiveness must first be experienced in ourselves, before we can extend it to others; that when Christ referred to “the least of these little ones” who need alms and forgiveness, He most certainly meant us, who receive it with greatest difficulty.

The message and the witness of Christ is that it has already been undone! It has been undone in God’s forgiving action. In Christ God has already undone the sin and removed the guilt-barrier that separates man from every possibility of genuine reconciliation. The words of the Bible that are used for forgiveness and pardon bear the original meaning of removing that which stands between. Man’s sin and guilt are “covered,” “lifted up” and “carried away.” That great obstruction has been removed. Forgiveness is more than an idea. It is an event in history. The word has been passed down to us that the way is clear. We must join the throng that sings and marches on! For if one would

know the deep joy of that song, he must become a part of that army that moves forever into the presence of God with glad and thankful hearts. Forgiveness is something to be shared in community, where it becomes a living reality that re-creates humanity.

Judgment is another source of despair. Whether we call it the wrath of God or the anger of man, we know the meaning of judgment. Surely, the history of this generation has been written in wrath. As for Job, life has become for many a burden in which they are judged without quite knowing why. When man dispenses with the ultimate judgment that belongs to God alone, he himself becomes a merciless judge, who destroys both himself and his neighbor. The anxiety of modern man involves him in a never-ending cycle of judgment, wrath, and despair. The poet Auden speaks of the brooding "malcontents who might have been":

. . . self-judged they sit,  
Sad haunters of Perhaps . . .<sup>4</sup>

The amount of hostility and aggression which is readily expressed in contemporary life is some measure of the weight of self-judgment and the consequent unlivable life.

Judgment is not without its lesson for man. For all his weariness with life, Job perceived that God cares in that he judges:

. . . And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one,  
And bringest me into judgment with Thee?

For Job, the experience of judgment was the occasion for the rediscovery of his relation to God. Here is a clue that points beyond the morass of wrath that grips modern man. The basic trouble lies in man's relation to God. No man escapes judgment. Existence and the possibility of freedom always produce crisis or judgment. Man's effort to escape

<sup>4</sup> Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*, p. 10. Used by permission of the publisher.

judgment amounts to an effort to flee from God and, thus, to escape the wrath of God. But the good news of Christianity is that while man is yet a sinner, trapped in his own wrath, God demonstrates his love in Christ to restore man to that fundamental relation. Indeed, God's mighty acts of grace in the biblical story bear the significance that God's judgment is His love and His love is judgment. These belong together. When either is separated from the other, a demon religion flourishes. *Agape* is both the means of man's self-fulfillment and a judgment upon every premature self-realization in sin. Love is a perpetual source of judgment upon every partial fulfillment of man under *law* or "works-righteousness," and it is the means of man's renewal beyond the dead-end of his own effort to justify himself. The Gospel states that Christ comes in the flesh, not once, nor merely in a second time, but that He comes again. He comes in every moment, and his coming breaks into every historical moment with the Word of God made Flesh. In that coming we are judged, but for redemption. Man's relation to God in love is both the source of his existence and the means whereby he may use his freedom to fulfill his selfhood. Without that relation and the community that nurtures it, wherein the grace of God heals the broken and completes the incomplete, man's freedom is cursed with destructive judgment. In every crisis or judgment God makes it possible for man, through forgiveness and reconciliation, to enter into the new creation while still living in the old world.

Death is the final absurdity of life apart from faith. It fills life with the dread of a meaningless journey to nowhere. It has become a matter of increasing concern to both psychiatry and theology that the fact of death is not met with honesty in this culture. It is either an occasion for much sentimentality, or it is repressed and avoided by curtained fear. It is interesting to note that De Tocqueville observed in 1835 that American preoccupation with the things of this world seemed to cover a fear of death. Apparently

death is the Achilles heel of a confident and pragmatic culture. Its finality seems so unsportsmanlike! The players are ejected before the final outcome is known, and everyone must enter this arena of confidence testing. Death becomes the symbol of meaninglessness in a people whose hopes have been anchored in this world only. Behind modern man's fruitless search for peace and for understanding in psychiatry and in new cults, there lies the threat of meaninglessness and the unanswered problem of death.

Man in anxiety finds it almost impossible to face the fact of death. His loved ones "pass away," and he and his friends enter a conspiracy to hide the facts. His funeral practices become the means of covering up the reality, rather than an aid to facing the truth honestly. The investigation of Lindemann and Fairbanks, at the Massachusetts General Hospital, of extended grief cases growing out of a disastrous fire tends to show that the successful handling of grief and emotional reorientation are greatly hindered by attitudes and religious practices that fail to face death as a fact.<sup>5</sup> In the Gospel of St. John (chapter 11), we see the reflections of the way in which the early Church handled this matter. Jesus is reported, in the story of Lazarus, first as saying that Lazarus' "sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God," a statement which some of the disciples apparently took to mean that Lazarus was not dead, but asleep. It became necessary for Christ to say "Lazarus is dead." The subsequent account of the raising of Lazarus should not hide the fact that Jesus set himself against the sentimentalism of evading death, by confusing it with sleep or by obscuring it with pat answers. ("I know that he shall rise again on the resurrection at the last day.") The raising of Lazarus then gave emphasis to Jesus' words:

I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

<sup>5</sup> Lindemann, Erich, "Symptomatology and Management of Acute Grief," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, CI (July, 1944), pp. 141-48.

The implications for the Christian community were clear: Even death cannot be used as an escape from the encounter with Him, in whom there is both resurrection and life. It is a peculiar form of pride in the living—perhaps even a *sickness unto death*—when anxious concern for the dead betrays an unwillingness to meet the Lord of life and death *now*. The early Church learned its lesson well, and beyond the days of God's mighty acts in Jesus, the ancient practice was to accept the fact of death, meeting it with a faith which knew that nothing could separate man from the love of God whom he had known in Christ. The Book of Common Prayer retains this emphasis when the Church gathers in the presence of death. The dead are committed to the earth with prayers and a recital of Christian faith in psalm, scripture, and creed wherein man's response embraces death—even death—within the community of resurrection:

I believe in . . . the Resurrection of the body:  
And the Life everlasting.

For the Christian the threat of death, like every other experience of anxiety, is met within a corporate fellowship that reaches beyond the tragic conditions of this life where sin has wrought the “sickness unto death.” His life in the Church is a constant reminder to the Christian that Christ came to heal and restore that which has been lost in sin. The buoyancy and strength of the Church in every age lies in the reality of life everlasting *now*:

We know that we have passed out of death into life,  
because we love the brethren (I John 3:14).

In every absolution for the penitent, in the words with which the sacrament of Christ's body and blood is administered, indeed, in the very fact of the sacraments the Church looks beyond this *sickness unto death* to life everlasting—and that as a present reality. It was in this spirit that St. Ignatius

of Antioch described the eucharistic breaking of bread as "the medicine of immortality."

The Christian stress on resurrection, rather than on immortality, further emphasizes the meaningfulness of existence as man has known it in the body. St. Paul spoke of the "spiritual-body" with which the Christian is clothed beyond life in the flesh, and this paradoxical expression is a way of conveying the Christian truth that God-recovered-wholeness in this life and beyond has relevance to the struggle in the flesh that we know *now*. The idea of immortality is easily corrupted into a way of escape into infinity, into a kind of second round of this life without the disturbances of real existence. In our culture it has become too often associated with the sentimental notion that something in man—his soul, his true self—does not have to die. But the Christian view is clear in insisting that, like Adam, all men must die. Those that are made alive in Christ do not escape death, but their *sickness unto death* is removed in that faith-trust community of resurrection. In this light the commitment of the self to that abiding community, the taking of one's stand in the risk of faith is but another way of losing one's life *to find it*.

#### SUMMARY

The "new being" in Christ is actual evidence that history is meaningful and that the Kingdom of God is beginning to come in Christian history. Throughout the years, Christ has offered a hearty, "Go thy way!" to those restored to wholeness in faith. This may account for that remarkable note of joy that has characterized the work and worship of those whose service is perfect freedom. The end of Christian living, as of faith and worship, is wholeheartedness:

We hymn while we sow  
And sing while we plough.

The impending realization of the Kingdom of God is another anxiety—the creative anxiety that presses for realization in the process of history. The Church, insofar as she is the genuine community of grace and the locus of God's Kingdom, is the answer to anxiety and despair, for here there may be perplexity, "but not in despair." Here the community of anxiety is translated into the fellowship of faith and love.

Christian faith relates to the deepest needs of man: to anxiety, to the threat of meaninglessness, and to bitter separation. It brings man into holy fellowship and sustains him in suffering and death. In that holy fellowship man and his dread fears are embraced in the imperishable love and mercy of God.

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# **ANXIETY AND FAITH**



# ANXIETY AND FAITH

*Toward Resolving Anxiety in Christian Community*

BY CHARLES R. STINNETTE, JR.

Foreword by David R. Hunter



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## FOREWORD

It is no easy undertaking to write a responsible book on the emotional unrest of our time and the resources of the Christian religion. Few writers should attempt it, for very few are capable of treating anxiety and religion without oversimplifying the one and corrupting the other. **ANXIETY AND FAITH** is a notable exception, having been written by a man whose professional life is firmly rooted in both disciplines.

The alacrity with which the usual popular writer in the psychological field diagnoses human difficulty and prescribes for it is a phenomenon of our time surpassed only by our incredible readiness to accept such advice. The recommendation usually boils down to a plea for an act of the will to be performed by the one who is in need, a plea that places the person at the mercy of his own will. In most human situations nothing could be more threatening or more inclined to aggravate the initial difficulty. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, that we seem so receptive to such advice.

Both psychology well grounded in laboratory exploration and theology which is rooted in Christian revelation have something to say to this twofold phenomenon which needs to be heard, albeit the two observations are quite different. What we know and acknowledge about man and what we believe or do not believe about God are determining factors both in the behaviour of the too hasty and superficial diagnostician and in the gullible and hungry receptiveness of the general public—ourselves.

When one says that the proper study of mankind is man,

this wise observation should be balanced with the assertion that the necessary companion of mankind in this study is God and man. If this claim is confusing, it could conceivably be attributable to the basis of the statement in the fundamental nature of God and man. Dr. Stinnette has provided us with a remarkably lucid treatment of this deepest of our needs, a need which can be found in the lives of every one of us.

This book will be helpful, first of all, to priest and minister, and to all who permit themselves to be used as agents in the cure of souls, clergy and laity alike. It will be a source of revealing insight to any teacher who conceives his task as primarily that of enabling the rich resources of our heritage to change and improve the life of the learner now. To the man or woman caught up in the travail of an anxiety neurosis this book will probably speak no more effectively than any other modern work, but at least it will not lead him down a road of delusion which can end only in despair. To the discerning layman who is capable of staying with a book which deals vividly with reality and refuses to offer any easy and alluring escape, ANXIETY AND FAITH can provide direction and Christian learning in the best tradition of all that is sound in modern psychology and creedal Christianity.

DAVID R. HUNTER

## PREFACE

Modern man knows anguish of soul in troubled dreams and in the pain of anxiety. There is a tyranny of despair and separation which is too familiar to every one of us. It is a wall of fear, a weight of guilt, and a consuming anger. What is its meaning? How shall we be delivered from its power? In what follows we propose to explore some of the answers to these questions. But no answer can remove the threat of anxiety. It must be faced. Within the Christian community it is possible in moments of faith and love not to banish anxiety, but to live beyond its power.

The interpretation of anxiety has played a crucial role in modern psychology and theology. Freud regarded it as "a nodal point," having significance for many other areas. Indeed anxiety, like freedom, points beyond clinical descriptions to a definition of man. It implies a spiritual capacity which thirsts for meaning. It is here in the total view of man—in the inferences drawn from the fact of anxiety—that psychology and religion must finally settle their differences.

Psychotherapy moves in the direction of man's recovery of himself through communication and human helpfulness. Progress in this comes only after much self-searching. The honest self-examination by modern man in therapy contrasts sharply with some "easy solutions" that glibly bear the name "Christian." Really to be searched and tried by God is a different matter. It is to know that there is no hiding place either in hell or in heaven. There is no wide gate nor easy way, but rather a narrow and hard path that leads to life beyond anxiety. It is a broken spirit and a contrite heart

which prepares man to walk that second mile from his own anxious ways to God's mercy and love.

Here is our thesis: Man alone cannot resolve anxiety. He needs others. He needs community. Even more, he needs the kind of community which is sustained by a more than human love. Too many of us have the impression that we may compel the gifts of faith by heroic but individual efforts. If we would have the fruits of the spirit, we must be willing to enter the community of the spirit. And for that gift no man cometh to the Father except by faith. In loneliness and separation men are forever strangers to one another, forever aliens so long as they try to create community out of their own stubborn hearts. But community comes as a gift of God. It comes only in faith. It comes when anxious fears are caught up in the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

I take this opportunity to express my indebtedness to Professors Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, and Horace Friess, of Union Seminary and Columbia University in New York City, who encouraged my study in this field. I am also more than grateful for the help of my beloved friend, now deceased, Professor David Roberts. They planted and I have tended—but the weeds are my responsibility! I have been fortunate in finding sympathetic interest, as well as sound discipline, at the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry in New York. Also I am indebted to many parishioners and colleagues, particularly to the Reverend Canon Theodore O. Wedel and to the good people who listened with patience when this material was given as a lecture series to "The Christianity and Modern Man" forum at the Washington Cathedral. Also, I owe a debt of gratitude to my wife, whose patient reading removed many, though not all, flaws in the text. Finally, I am thankful to the Reverend Dr. David R. Hunter for writing the Foreword and to Margaret Lockwood, who has prepared the manuscript for publication.

This book is not intended as a substitute for self-searching—either in prayer or in explicit therapy. It is intended to expose some of the “dead end” ways we choose under the threat of anxiety. “Perplexed, but not driven to despair,” the Christian may yet be enabled to endure his anxiety—by sharing it in the community of faith and thus come again to the confidence of the Psalmist:

I sought the Lord and He answered me,  
And delivered me from all my fears (Psalm 34:4).

CHARLES R. STINNETTE, JR.



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## *Anxiety and Faith*

O Holy Spirit, through whom the walls of loneliness are shattered and our community in faith is made manifest, clothe us with the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Thou hast gathered us together out of our solitary ways. Thou dost give beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning. So strengthen us with faith for anxiety that we may stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free.

(Based on Isaiah 61:1-3 and  
Galatians 5:1)



***Part I***

**MAN'S EFFORT TO  
UNDERSTAND ANXIETY**



## ANXIETY AND THE WHOLE MAN

When Hamlet declares that conscience makes cowards of us all, he could be voicing a cherished conviction of this age. For modern man is troubled. And his inner turmoil he expresses in the distorted patterns of his life. He seems in many ways broken and spent before his time. In one instance he is a man, driven and twisted by a debilitating hostility; in another he is deformed and immobilized by guilt feelings. Or she is a woman whose inner chaos drives her to seek help, but whose panic prevents her facing her real problem. They are all cowards. Yet they are also the ordinary people of this moment in history, of whom Auden speaks in his aptly entitled *The Age of Anxiety*, as

. . . phantoms who try  
through much drink by magic to restore  
the primitive pact with pure feeling.<sup>1</sup>

What is anxiety? Poet, philosopher, and clinician have struggled to give an adequate description of this night of man's soul. Yet to modern psychiatry belongs the distinction of having the eyes and the ears which have recorded most clearly the picture of anxiety. The condition is one that has

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Auden, *The Age of Anxiety* (New York: Random House, 1947), p. 10. Used by permission of the publisher.

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always been a part of man's experience; and it remains. "In the world," said Christ, "you have tribulation" (John 16:33). The German Bible uses here the word *angst*, the root of which lies embedded in our word *anxiety*. The reference suggests that the same human experience which has been of great concern to modern psychiatry and theology is common to man as man.

To answer the question, What is anxiety?, we must explore some of the current theories of its origin that have been put forward in psychiatry and theology. While we must keep in mind that these two disciplines approach the problem quite differently, we can, nevertheless, establish correlations between the two. On the deeper level, the question drives us beyond those easy and pat remedies for anxiety which sometimes bear the description "Christian." The convinced Christian knows that the answer to the problem of anxiety comes only with the courage to face its contradictory aspects—guilt and hostility. In terms of faith this means waiting, waiting with self-searching before the God of our salvation.

An immediate hazard in the effort to deal with the problem before us is the broad and indefinite use of the term *anxiety*. It is used in theological writing to describe that feeling of *dread* and *fear* which man experiences in the possibility of his separation from God. The same term is used in clinical medicine to indicate the experience of stress that accompanies emotional disturbance and a host of bodily disorders. We shall use the term *anxiety* in the sense conveyed by its German correlative, *angst*, which referred originally to a strait or a narrow passage, such as would restrict breathing. It should be added that anxiety, as an anonymous and "free floating" threat to his existence, is experienced by man in his totality. For anxiety, as distinguished from fear, is that condition which fails to discern its object, whereas fear is directly related to its object. Karen Horney makes this clear distinction:

Fear and anxiety are both proportionate reactions to danger, but in the case of fear the danger is a transparent, objective one and in the case of anxiety it is hidden and subjective.<sup>2</sup>

Hence a postman who avoids a particular dog for quite understandable reasons may be said to fear, for the object, in this instance, is clear. But a man in whom the very sight of any dog arouses violent feelings and a desire to run away is in the grip of anxiety. The sight of a dog—any dog—is enough to set in motion seemingly unfounded and unmanageable anxiety.

As we shall see later, much of the emphasis of psychotherapy is directed toward the goal of uncovering and evaluating the real and deeply buried object of anxiety. This is also a major task of Christian theology. To be sure, the question, Why are we anxious?, has become, in this day of great fear, a popular subject both for tabletalk and for community discussion. When the members of a church discussion group were asked recently to list the *manifestations* and the *causes* of anxiety in our daily life, their response demonstrated the difficulty of matching manifestation with cause. Some of the manifestations were: indecisiveness, escapism, busyness, dissatisfaction, impatience, meaninglessness, desire to be liked, shallowness, and a frantic grasping for religious answers! The causes given were not so numerous: possible war, insecurity, loneliness, guilt, death, and competitiveness. These people reveal in their answers the deep furrow anxiety has ploughed through modern life. They also remind us of our ineffectiveness before its threat.

#### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WHOLENESS

"But, Chaplain, my arms will not obey when my head says 'stop'!" The speaker was a young and attractive ser-

<sup>2</sup> Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality in Our Time* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1937), pp. 43-44.

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geant in an overseas army hospital. When brought to the hospital, he was suffering from a gross tremor in both arms. He felt quite bewildered by his continued symptoms, and he insisted with a smile that he had "no problems, no worries." He was the only son of a father incapacitated by tuberculosis and of an "overworked" mother. Like most other civilian soldiers, he looked forward to the day when he could go home. But the genuineness of his symptoms was unquestionable. Since several interviews revealed no conscious conflicts and since time and limited facilities precluded longer treatment, the psychiatrist decided to administer a hypnotic drug and to question the patient during the period of hypnosis. (Narcosynthesis was widely used in brief therapy during the war.) The sergeant was eager to cooperate in this. During the first narcosynthesis the patient revealed that he had known a man who was permanently afflicted with tremor. After great agitation, a second narcosynthesis brought forth the fact that he was very much worried about his mother, who was having to manage a huge ranch without the necessary help. The sergeant feared that his mother's health would be permanently damaged. He had repressed this fear, as well as his desire to do something about it, because he "did not wish to ask for special favors."

A day later the sergeant presented quite a different picture in interview. He was no longer smiling, but the tremor was gone. He was worried and spoke painfully of the cause of his worry. The only physical symptom now, apart from his general appearance, was "a slight heartburn." He was now "facing the facts," which, he seemed to realize, was the cost of the removal of the tremor. With the assistance of the Red Cross, the sergeant was returned home on a "dependency discharge" a few days later.

The case of this sergeant vividly demonstrates that unity of mind and body that has regained wide acceptance in modern thinking. Although he was unaware of the cause

of his symptoms, they nevertheless expressed a matter of great concern to him. While the sergeant "forgot" his concern, his body "remembered." That man in his functioning is an indivisible unit, is a working axiom in the field of human understanding today. Franz Alexander, in a research paper on psychosomatic medicine, points to this process by which anxious concerns get transformed into bodily manifestations (hysterical conversion) as an illustration, *in fact*, of the unity of mind and body. Many ulcer sufferers have noticed that a period of strain coincides with a flare-up in pain. The implication is clear: man is a psychosomatic whole. Wear and tear of any kind affects the whole man.

#### **WHY DOES SEPARATION OCCUR?**

It is a striking fact that in most primitive cultures the functions of priest and physician are frequently combined. It is as if man knew in the innermost recesses of his being that neither his spiritual life nor his bodily needs can be isolated and ignored. It is unfortunately true, however, that the history of medicine has been the record of a persistent growing apart of the spiritual and physical aspects of man's life, as the gap widened between priest and physician. This tendency to fragment man is due to many factors, such as philosophical opinions that operate on the assumption that the only real world is the world of observable phenomena, as well as to the nature of the experimental method that science develops as a genuine tool. The separation of priest and physician may be further understood as an inevitable component of the struggle for freedom by medical science against the authoritarian power of the Church. For these and other reasons the isolation and anxiety of man have been emphasized by therapies that have dealt too long with only a part of the whole man. The fact that both scientific and theological thinking have today turned again to the concept of wholeness does not remove immediately the problems that years of isolation and separation have left behind.

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It is important to keep in mind that biblical man is an indivisible unity. The Bible does not split man into component parts. That man is, that he is a *living soul*, carries with it the assumption that his personality is whole. The Old Testament scholars are agreed that dualism has no application to Hebrew psychology and that each bodily function, be it *nephesh* (breath) or the heart, is but a different aspect of the unity of personality. The expression of this wholeness is contained in the pivotal commandment in Deuteronomy (6:5): ". . . and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."<sup>3</sup> As in obedience to the commandment, so in sin also, man's unity within himself, as well as his solidarity with his people, is maintained. Thus the prophet could exclaim:

Ah! sinful nation, guilt laden people . . . the whole head is ailing, and the whole heart is sick (Isaiah 1:4a and 5b, Goodspeed).

The New Testament is at one with the Old in this matter of man's unity. Greek dualism had little influence upon it. Man there is redeemed not merely by pious acts, but by responding as a whole person to Christ and by entering the community of the Holy Spirit, the Church. That new life is one of relationship: I-Thou. It speaks the language of faith, which is the language of wholes. And the Church in her Creeds is primarily concerned with a living affirmation of the whole man, "I believe in . . ." We shall focus upon the Christian view of wholeness in relation to anxiety in later chapters. Here we desire only to call attention to the wholeness of man in the biblical perspective.

The revolution that broke the medieval synthesis seriously challenged that ancient unity also. Disturbing forces

<sup>3</sup> Scriptural quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible (copyright 1946 and 1952).

Quotations from the Psalter, unless otherwise noted, are from the Book of Common Prayer.

had been at work for centuries before the storm broke, creating a growing tradition of philosophy and life in which mind and body were separated. While not all philosophy became dualistic, many philosophers moved in that direction in their effort to stand off and view life in a passive, spectatorial manner. Behind their attempt was the assumption that there is in man a separate entity, mind or soul, which observes and records, but which is not involved in the actual process of growth and change. Philosophically, modern man's fate was decided by that underlying assumption. It was an easy step thence to the view that the only real world is the physical world of observable phenomena. Secularism, a "this world only" view, was the dark horse of the Enlightenment. Despite their personal concern with spiritual matters, Galileo and Descartes were the fathers of modern materialism by virtue of the fact that they relegated man's spirit to a place of relative unimportance. Both Locke and Kant struggled with the problem, only to discover an impassable gulf between the observing mind and the world described by science. This view, which tries to restrict all knowledge to the mathematics derived from observable phenomena, still persists in some circles to challenge the unity of man that psychosomatic study has recovered.

#### TOWARD RECOVERED UNITY

The rise of biology as a science in the nineteenth century, with its view of all life as the product of interaction between environment and organism, opened the way for the rediscovery of man's unity. If he is more than a well-oiled machine that functions automatically, man's attitudes and motives must again enter the picture. The heart may have reasons that the mind does not know. Every view of man must take into consideration the fact that bodily life is not merely physical, nor is mental life merely psychic. The way has been opened again to see man as a whole, to see him as the biblical picture delineates him. "The eye is the lamp of

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the body," Christ has said. And by that light or by that darkness, as the case may be, the whole of man, both body and spirit, is known.

By contrast, the Victorian Age fixed a vast gulf between attitudes and behavior. Indeed, when motives got uncomfortably close to awareness, ladies resorted to the "polite faint," and gentlemen took a tighter reign on their discipline of repression. This was grist for a genius like Sigmund Freud! The view of man widely accepted today was formulated some years ago by John Dewey when, speaking before a medical society, he suggested that the old phrase, "A sound mind in a sound body," should be recast to read, "A sound human being in a sound human environment."

The psychology of wholeness still encounters difficulties within the medical profession. There are still some who say that "either the body is sick, or there is nothing wrong." But how can so prejudiced a view understand the problem of anxiety? The illness arises precisely in the area in which mind and body meet. We gather, however, that attitudes in medical circles have been changing since Gregory Zilboorg wrote: "Medicine had less differences with the medieval barbers who practiced surgery than it has today with psychiatry."<sup>4</sup>

A most puzzling question is, perhaps, why religious thinkers who hold the basic conviction that the unseen reality is operative in nature and supremely so in man, accepted the tragic partition of man into such divisions as spiritual and physical. Carried to its logical conclusions, such a view would certainly undermine the doctrine of the Incarnation and render the sacraments meaningless. This dichotomy was a serious pitfall for both medicine and religion. Its consequent destruction of man's unity led medicine into an extreme specialization that failed to treat the whole man; it also made religion irrelevant to the real world. As

<sup>4</sup> Gregory Zilboorg, *History of Medical Psychology* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1941), p. 521. Used by permission of the publisher.

early as the turn of the century, William James was warning, in *Varieties of Religious Experience*, that the "mind-cure" sects that were then spreading at a rapid pace throughout the world were man's spontaneous answer to his own sickness. When traditional religion failed to heal man in his depths, new sects arose to do the task. Despite the dominance of views that ignored a large area of man's being, new ways to express his wholeness in worship were found. Again, wisdom in the heart of man goes her way, ignoring the artificial barriers that man constructs. For, what is planted deep in the soul of man wills to come alive—"deep calls to deep." Its voice will be heard!

This brief excursion into the psychology of wholeness should give emphasis to the place of anxiety in man's understanding of himself. Anxiety dwells in man's spirit, and it speaks through his every motion. Today it expresses itself in a headache, tomorrow in a paralyzing fear. It will not "stay put," precisely because man is not fixed. He is a creature brought to life by the breath of God. The picture of anxiety is one of constant motion, just as life is motion—and decision! We turn now to a brief account of the effort of psychiatry to describe and interpret that picture.

#### UNCONSCIOUS MOTIVATION IN ANXIETY

Even before Freud, men of imagination in science and in literature had come to the conclusion that hysterical symptoms have meaning. It is Freud's merit that he organized his observations around the basic postulate that psychic processes are strictly determined and that thoughts, feelings, and actions are motivated by unconscious emotional forces. The significant discovery that motives exist outside of awareness and that they play an important role in human behavior is one of his lasting contributions. The earliest description of psychoanalysis at work is to be found in that famous collection of *Case Studies in Hysteria*, which Freud wrote in collaboration with Joseph Breuer. In the

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cases both of Anna O. and Lucy R. unconscious factors were operative in the symptoms presented, and it was found that these submerged factors could only be uncovered by the circuitous route of much talk and a process of inquiry that one patient described as "chimney sweeping" and a "talking cure." It is interesting to note that, in this early work, the authors were sensitive to the effects of the conditions of life and of the patients' tendencies toward phantasy, factors which were destined to play important roles in the later development of psychoanalysis.

In his later writings Freud developed the concept of the unconscious and demonstrated its manifestation in dream, phantasy, and the patient's analysis of his errors. Indeed, the technique of *free association*, by which the patient progressively reveals the contents of his unconscious life, became a standard procedure in psychotherapy. This concept of the unconscious has come to be widely used in understanding human behavior, not only in psychology, but also in religion, anthropology, ethics, and in other fields.

### EARLIER INFLUENCES

Another important discovery by Freud which we must have in mind as we describe anxiety is that earlier influences continue to be operative in a person's later life, but in ways that have been well hidden from consciousness. Childhood patterns of reaction are active in adult life. And the rejected child is likely to continue to feel and act rejected as an adult. Indeed, Freud's early efforts to explain anxiety phobias and obsessions resulted in his conclusion that they are "defensive reactions" which protect the individual from bearing in his conscious mind underlying self-reproaches and intolerable ideas.<sup>5</sup> The continued influence of infantile reac-

<sup>5</sup> Sigmund Freud, "The Defense of Neuro-Psychosis," in *Collected Papers* (London: The International Psycho-Analytical Library), Vol. I, CH. IV. All quotations from the *Collected Papers* are used by permission of the publisher.

tions and their significance in personality development has provided the point of departure for dynamic psychology, a psychology that goes beyond Freud. Harry Stack Sullivan, for example, holds that the self is made up of "reflected appraisals" and that those restraints on the child's freedom necessary for his socialization bring about the evolution of "self-dynamism" with its dissociated, as well as conscious, aspects in the adult personality. Erich Fromm, however, holds a view of personality that is basically conceived in terms of the specific kind of relatedness that the individual bears toward the world rather than in terms of his satisfaction of specific instincts, as did Freud. Hence, in Fromm's view, this *relatedness* is established in the child's relations to parental figures, who may all too frequently frighten and confuse the child by their methods until he is forced to deny his own feelings. Thus Fromm writes: "The child starts with giving up the expression of his feeling and eventually gives up the very feeling itself."<sup>6</sup> Such sacrifices are not made without cost, and as we shall later see, the cost is the hostility and anxiety of later life.

#### DESCRIPTIONS OF ANXIETY

For the description of anxiety, we must begin with the clinical picture which Freud set forth in his early monograph, *The Anxiety Neurosis* (1894). It appears that in Freud's mind there was from the beginning some correlation between the constricting and inhibiting experiences of anxiety, and the feeling associated with the narrow passage through which the child passes in birth. But it was not until much later that Freud interpreted anxiety as a symbolic reproduction of the trauma of birth, the experience which becomes the prototype of all occasions when life is endangered. In an early paper on anxiety-neurosis, Freud described it

<sup>6</sup> Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1941), p. 242. Used by permission of the publisher.

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clinically as a condition displaying “general irritability” and “anxious expectation” grouped around the central symptom of “morbid anxiety.” Freud regarded the element of anxious expectation as an unfailing component. He wrote:

We may perhaps say that there is here a *quantum of anxiety in a free floating condition*, which in any state of expectation controls the selection of ideas, and is ever ready to attach itself to any suitable ideational content.<sup>7</sup>

The important fact in this clinical picture is that anxiety displays a “free floating” character and thus may appear in many forms. Freud recognized and listed more than a dozen types of anxiety-attack; but we can today multiply that list many times. In the case, cited earlier, of the sergeant, anxiety was expressed through gross tremor. But in most cases it appears in less dramatic, although equally persistent, forms. In the reports of those listing their own symptoms, these elements always seem to be present: a feeling of indefinite, objectless fear that always threatens to overcome them, a sense of danger out of all proportion to the actual situation at hand, and a heartbreaking inability to discover the cause of and remedy for it in effective action. And one may feel all these things under the stimulus of a minor crisis or even without a crisis.

For the most part, anxiety operates to restrict living. As Lavinia puts it, in T. S. Eliot’s *The Cocktail Party*, “Always on the verge of some wonderful experience and it never happened.” A kind of pervasive anxiety grips many people today. For them life never comes off. Anticipation is never fulfilled in experience. As time goes by, they no longer sense even anticipation. They shuffle through a macabre dance of living that is not living and are ever haunted by a vague threat that can never be identified.

<sup>7</sup> Freud, *Collected Papers*, I, 80. Used by permission of the publisher.

### INTERPRETATIONS OF ANXIETY

It has been said that one of the greatest contributions of Freud to the study of human behavior is that he taught men how to observe. He equipped men, so to speak, with the eyes and the ears to record the clinical picture of anxiety. He trained them to see below the surface of the physical and to hear unspoken, but significant, words. In the language of the spirit, we may say that Freud was able to see, as few men have seen, the *signs* that point to the mighty struggle that goes on within the soul of man. The history of Freud's successive interpretations of anxiety is the history of the psychoanalytic movement for nearly fifty years. In some respects it is not unlike the history of theological development in religious thought, in that while it is packed with disputes and variant schools, it is gaining all the while vast experience with which to meet the problems of human behavior. For our purposes we need only briefly indicate the main interpretations that have influenced recent thinking about anxiety.

In his first description of anxiety, Freud seems to have accepted Breuer's thesis that "hysterical patients suffer principally from reminiscences."<sup>8</sup> Two years later, in 1894, Freud attempted on his own to explain the origin of phobias and obsessions as defenses against an unbearable idea that had been repressed.<sup>9</sup> But in 1896, he concluded that "obsessions are always reproaches re-emerging in a transmuted form under repression, reproaches which invariably relate to a sexual deed performed with pleasure in childhood."<sup>10</sup> Thus Freud moved in the direction of the formulation of his first view of anxiety. It is due, he said in effect, to the

<sup>8</sup> Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer, "On the Psychical Mechanisms of Hysterical Phenomena," *Collected Papers* (London: Hogarth Press), I, 29.

<sup>9</sup> Freud, "The Defense of Neuro-Psychosis," *ibid.*, I, 72.

<sup>10</sup> Freud, "Further Remarks on the Defense of Neuro-Psychosis," *ibid.*, I, 162.

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repression of impulses of a sexual nature which, when prevented from discharge, produce physical tension and are transformed into anxiety. Freud's statements concerning the evolution of anxiety are cast in language reminiscent of that of a physicist dealing with the law of conservation of energy. Anxiety originates in every instance automatically through a process of economy. It is due to "the deflection of somatic sexual excitation from the psychical field and . . . an abnormal use of it due to this deflection."<sup>11</sup> Men and women in forced or voluntary continence are living under conditions likely to produce anxiety.

Firm in his conviction that sex repression is at the base of anxiety, Freud developed his theory of *libido*, which he conceived as a force of "variable quantity" by which sexual processes and transformations could be measured. Libido, diverted by repression from its usual course, reappears in anxiety symptoms that are, in some measure, "surrogates" for the specific activity that would otherwise follow upon sexual excitation. Indeed, Freud regarded anxiety symptoms as symbols of the patient's misdirected sexual activity, and in his "General Remarks on Hysterical Attacks" (1909), he described hysterical attacks as "coitus-like." In *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, Freud elaborated upon the themes of sexual aberrations, infantile sexuality, and the transformations of puberty. There he rounded out his sex theory by marking off the child's developmental stages according to his sexual orientation: oral, anal-sadistic, or genital. Since we are only concerned with Freud's interpretation of the origin of anxiety as sexual, we need not consider more fully his theories of sex, except to note that the whole structure rests upon the assumption of a specific "libido instinct," present from the beginning of life.

It is important to note that although Freud regarded himself throughout his career as a natural scientist with no

<sup>11</sup> Freud, "Justification for Detaching from Neurasthenia a Particular Syndrome: The Anxiety Neurosis," *ibid.*, I, 97.

message for mankind, his respect for his task and his unwillingness to refrain from saying unpopular things made him a prophet to his generation. In 1898, when he was receiving sharp and, in most cases, unjust criticism for his frank discussion of sex, he struck back in words packed with angry conviction:

The opposition of a generation of physicians who can no longer remember their own youth must be broken down, the pride of fathers who are unwilling to descend to the level of common humanity in the eyes of their children will have to be overcome, the unreasonable prudery of mothers who at present quite generally regard it as an incomprehensible and also undeserved stroke of fate that "just their children should be nervous," would have to be met.<sup>12</sup>

But Freud's view that in the psychic economy there is a simple and direct relation between sexual repression and anxiety still failed to explain many problems of human behavior. Freud was deeply disturbed by the fact that the hostility and aggression in the individual seemed to move inexorably into modern warfare. It seemed that collective man had chosen the way of mass suicide, and by the end of the First World War Freud began to revise his theory of anxiety. Two of his disciples, Jung and Adler, had already challenged some of his basic assumptions and had established new schools of psychology. One reason for Freud's revision of his early anxiety theory may lie in the fact that, although he had actively opposed all religious answers and had avoided anything which might suggest *a way of life*, he was forced by actual experience to realize that the depths of man's tragedy is more profound than the attribution of it to a "somatic demand" indicates. Gregory Zilboorg, in *Mind, Medicine and Man*, made an observation that Freud himself

<sup>12</sup> Freud, "Sexuality in the Actiology of the Neurosis," *ibid.*, I, 239. Used by permission of the publisher.

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later admitted; namely, that Freud's discoveries about human behavior were in fact the counterpart in dynamic psychology of the doctrine of original sin.

Specifically it was Freud's concern with hostility and aggression that led to the development of his second theory of anxiety. During the First World War he had opportunity to study extensively the relation of hostility and compulsive activity in war neurosis. His reflections and clinical experience brought him to the conclusion that to the instincts of hunger and sex an "aggressive instinct" must be added. In Freud's view this aggressive instinct functions to protect the individual from a deeply buried tendency toward self-destruction. Indeed, Freud maintained that a tendency toward self-destruction, or a "death instinct," is never absent in any vital human experience. In order to survive, man counters his own self-destructive impulses with those of hostility and aggression which, despite social curbs, explode in individual and social reactions. Freud writes:

The limitation of aggression is the first and perhaps the hardest sacrifice which society demands from the individual. The setting up of the super-ego, which makes the dangerous aggressive impulses its own, is like introducing a garrison into a province that is on the brink of rebellion.<sup>18</sup>

Along with adding the assumption of the death instinct, Freud stressed in his revised interpretation the indefinite and pervasive character of anxiety. He now interpreted anxiety as the fear of those impulses, the discovery of which would involve the subject in external danger. The recognition of hostility (this latter Freud regarded as the counter of the death instinct) constitutes for the subject such a danger, since it immediately raises the possibility of counter-attack by one's fellows. Thus the real object of anxiety re-

<sup>18</sup> Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1933), p. 151. Used by permission of the publisher.

mains unknown to the individual since this object is the hostility and the aggressive impulses which would render him helpless before the power of society, were they to come into consciousness. The primal experience behind these impulses, in Freud's view, is the "remembered and anticipated situation of helplessness," the prototype of which is the helplessness of the infant entirely dependent upon his parents. Accordingly, the adult experience of anxiety recapitulates the trauma of birth and is accompanied by the same pain and helplessness.

In his second theory of anxiety Freud did not give up his view of the instinctive origin of anxiety, inasmuch as he continued to postulate a death instinct at the base of life. But he was forced to revise his view of the simple mechanical relation of sex repression to anxiety and to take into account the person's primal experience and relations. Whereas for Freud the interpersonal factors served simply as vehicles for the expression of instinctual drives, other observers have regarded them as important in the origin of anxiety itself.

An important question remains unanswered in Freud: Why does the anxious adult in his relation to other people continue to act as if he were still in the infantile state of helplessness? The findings of cultural anthropologists have suggested a part of the answer to this question. By living in the midst of other cultures and by observing the infinite ways in which every culture shapes and forms the character of its people, these anthropologists have directed our interest to the forces that mold man in our civilization. Ruth Benedict, for example, in *Patterns of Culture*, draws attention to the fact that every culture has a word for "heathen" or "outsider"; and it usually identifies its own implicit attitudes as the attitudes of *man*. It follows that every culture fashions the individual personality in terms of its own values, its own motif, and its own norm. Thus, if we are to understand why the adult continues to act and feel as a helpless child, we must see him not only as an individual with instinctual ego

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needs, but as a person whose attitudes have been fashioned by the culture in which he is reared. That fashioning impresses upon the infant the prevailing attitudes, whether of anxiety or of calmness and trust, that surround him while he is brought into the world, fed, handled, taught, punished, and rewarded. In short, these prevailing attitudes will reflect, through infinite contacts, the experience of that culture in love and tenderness, as well as in anxiety, hostility, and guilt, all of which the individual has made his own by empathy. It is obvious that *this* culture, which is continuous with Freud's, leaves modern man feeling helpless, and thus anxious. He is "a stranger and afraid" in a world he "never made." This appreciation of the profound influence of culture on the inner springs of man's life provides the basis for a deeper view of man, as well as of his society and of his faith community.

Psychiatrists have since developed the dynamic interpretation, beyond Freud's, to include the interpersonal factor as a present reality in neurosis and the cultural factor as an influencing agent. Karen Horney has suggested that Freud's explanation of anxiety as the repetition of an original anxiety accompanying the birth experience is an instance of his mechanical way of thinking; and she holds that with the passing of the assumption that instinctual drives modified only by environment are at the base of anxiety, the way is open to study "life conditions" as its cause. Horney would reject the assumption that psychoanalysis has "depth" only if it establishes a mechanical connection with infantile drives. While admitting the importance of unconscious motivations in repressed strivings, feelings and fears, Horney, in *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*, emphasizes the present role of these repressed strivings in the actual and present life conditions of the patient. She also regards anxiety as an emotional response to danger which, unlike fear, is diffuse and indefinite; but in her view the danger lies in the core of the personality which has been shaped by the person's living

conditions, by the structure of his personality, and by his values in terms of love, work, convictions, possessions, and reputation. In *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (which, perhaps not without significance for the major thesis, I find myself at times twisting into "the neurotic culture in our personality"!), Horney concludes that anxiety arises "in general not so much from a fear of our impulses as from fear of our repressed impulses."<sup>14</sup>

While acknowledging his debt to Freud on many occasions, Fromm puts forward the more recent dynamic interpretation of personality structure in contrast to the older biological and mechanical views. Whereas the Freudian view regards man as existing in a closed world with more or less fixed relations in terms of basic instincts, Fromm regards personality structure as the result of the kind of "relatedness" which the individual establishes with regard to himself, to others, and to his world. Fromm would use the early formulations and clinical observations of Freud, but not his interpretations.

Fromm's main thesis is that, as man emerges from a primitive oneness with the tribe and nature and as he gains his freedom, he is faced with the necessity of uniting with his fellows and the world on a higher level in spontaneous love and productive work. The alternative to this is the loss of his freedom and integrity, since anxiety accompanies his newly won "*freedom from*" bondage and drives him relentlessly on either to give up that unbearable freedom or to realize his "*freedom to*" achieve individuality. In a striking passage, Fromm mentions the biblical myth of man's expulsion from paradise as representing the fundamental relation between man and freedom:

He (the free Adam) is alone and free, yet powerless and afraid. The newly won freedom appears as a curse;

<sup>14</sup> Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), p. 75.

he is free from the sweet bondage of paradise, but he is not free to govern himself, to realize his individuality.<sup>15</sup>

Hence paradise lost cannot be regained, but in his "freedom to" actualize his capacities for self-realization, man is challenged by a vision more satisfying than a return to paradise.

As might be expected, Fromm presupposes a humanistic ethic as the basis for man's striving for self-realization. His writings are packed with a zeal reminiscent of the prophets of Israel. His analysis of the lack of social wholeness and of the manifold ways in which man attempts to escape his freedom is based upon a profound understanding of the condition of modern man. Even though the picture is dark, Fromm believes man can correct it for himself. He regards anxiety as a culturally determined product that exists in almost direct proportion to the degree of "unlived life." Man's health lies in the direction of greater expression of selfhood.

Harry Stack Sullivan, however, has put *interpersonal relations* at the very heart of his interpretation of psychiatry. For Sullivan, anxiety has its origins in the interpersonal relations through which one has come to be a person—interpersonal relations which date from the moment of birth. Sullivan makes much of the *distortion* that the child suffers early in life.<sup>16</sup> This distortion comes from two sources: the child's own helplessness and the unhealthy attitudes of parental figures, primarily of the mother. And throughout life it continues to interfere with awareness, to block emotions, and to limit the enjoyment of living. Sullivan points to

<sup>15</sup> Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, pp. 34-35. Used by permission of the publisher.

<sup>16</sup> Harry Stack Sullivan, *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1953).

Sullivan uses the term *parataxic distortion* to describe the initial discrimination between the self and the world that comes about through the child's early experience in interpersonal relations. From that *parataxic distortion* is built up the "vast development of actions, thoughts, foresights, etc., which are calculated to protect one from a feeling of insecurity and helplessness . . ."

the enormous role that anxiety plays in modern life, as evidenced by the prevalence of inefficient work and play and by the elaborate obsessional patterns and rituals. But Sullivan also holds that even as man becomes anxious in the area of his relation to other people, so also his health is to be regained through emotionally satisfying and re-creating interpersonal relations. Such a view of illness and health, including as it does the "biology and pathology of interpersonal relations," has proved to be a meeting ground not only for differing approaches within psychiatry, but also for as widely divergent disciplines as theology, law, and education.

Sullivan points out that the infant is born in too immature a state to live by its own "functional activity" and that in this helplessness the feeling of being "mothered" is his first vivid impression. It is here that anxiety has its origin, for by "empathetic observation" the child reflects the appraisal of his mother. If she is disapproving, even silently so, her feelings are communicated by empathy to the child. Anxiety results and, all too often, is luxuriantly reinforced by life experience. In Sullivan's view anxiety is a tool, like the infant's cry or the child's constipation, that keeps the individual from becoming aware of his intolerable loss of self esteem. It gradually restricts personal awareness in a wide area, and as a result many impulses, desires, and needs come to exist dissociated from the self. If along the way in infancy, childhood, or pre-adolescence a good relation with a nurse, a teacher, or a parental figure has been established, it is likely that anxiety will be sharply reduced. But tragically enough, many people never reach the stage of maturity with the capacity to love and to be loved, because a reflected low respect for the self has long since paralyzed their growth.

It can be seen from this brief survey of recent interpretations of anxiety that Freudianism has been modified to take into account the cultural and interpersonal factors.

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Other writers, like Rollo May in *The Problem of Anxiety*, have brought together these varying interpretations, but more with reference to the clinical picture than to the religious meaning. This glimpse of the effort of psychiatry to understand anxiety must now be placed against the broader canvas of man's effort to see his total life in faith.

### S U M M A R Y

In this chapter we have attempted to describe anxiety and to cover some of the important interpretations of its origin and social manifestations. Perhaps the most outstanding characteristic of anxiety is the helplessness that it inflicts upon the individual. He is at the mercy of a driving force which robs life of satisfaction and fulfillment. In this respect anxiety may be compared to panic reactions, which are characterized by multiple, disorganized, and meaningless responses. Anxiety mechanisms likewise display this ineffective and disoriented character. A panic-stricken person is usually immobilized before the real object of danger, and the anxiety-ridden person cannot come to deal with the real cause of his condition. Anxiety is a slow, but persistent, terror with an underside of self-rejection and hostility that is only vaguely indicated by the title of Menninger's book, *Man Against Himself*.

As a factor in social conditions, anxiety tends to perpetuate itself through the prevailing attitudes that shape the individual's development in family and community. Here is a disturbed Negro soldier from the South, who aroused his fellows in the night with the scream, "Don't get the wrong idea! Don't get the wrong idea!" When asked about the outburst, the soldier said that he had dreamed he was pursued by "doctors in white coats." He added that they were the same "white doctors" to whom he had confessed his encounter with a white French prostitute. His nightmare was indicative of a deep anxiety that eventually forced his hospitalization. No doubt, individual

factors played their part in this man's illness, but, in addition, the cultural factor with its rigid and impassable gulf between Negro and white also took its toll. Indeed, existence itself has taken on the character of anxiety for this person. Who can say whether therapy, or adjustment, or anything short of the saving grace of God will heal this wound?

The prevalence of anxiety and its deeply rooted character suggest that the problem will not be solved *in toto* by any action designed simply to adjust or even to re-educate man. Anxiety is intimately associated with the condition of man's existence. Man must live with it, and through it, in faith. Social action and techniques of therapy will relieve specific situations and reduce his vulnerability to it, but anxiety remains a problem as long as man remains man, and not a tree. Let Job make his witness:

For the thing that I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me (Job 3:25).

## IN THE WORLD . . . ANXIETY

In the world you have tribulation . . .

—John 16:33

These words of Christ from the Fourth Gospel suggest the indigenous character of anxiety in existence. For at the very heart of life is the necessity of accepting its conditions. Many of us would defer that decision until we could be sure of our answer. Meanwhile we drift through the night of this life like a watchman making his rounds, that journey paced with a clock and the whole meaning too often consisting of having "punched in" at certain stations! But that aimlessness is as much an expression of our rejection of life as would be our shouting with Job:

I loathe my life . . .

Let me alone, for my days are a breath (Job 7:16).

The decision which life forces upon us—whether at heart to accept or to reject its conditions—always involves anxiety. What is more, it is a decision that can never be regarded as settled. Whether we affirm life or choose death in the midst of living, the matter is not finally decided since the alternative continues to confront us. One never rids himself of that dilemma or its attendant anxiety. But the words of Christ suggest a way of living with this permanent crisis in unfailing confidence.

### CREATIVE ANXIETY

It is a mistake to talk of getting rid of anxiety. It may be reduced by psychotherapy, and it is partially resolved

in Christian faith and community. There is no necessary antagonism between the two ways of healing. One is an instrument for emotional re-education; the other is a way of life in contact with the Source of all healing. Conflict between religion and psychiatry may be found in the inferences drawn from human experience, but it need not occur in the area of therapy and pastoral care. The concern with *how* and *what* in psychiatry does not always produce a unified answer as to *why*. This the conflicting philosophies of psychiatry obviously preclude.

Yet even when these inferences seem hostile to religion, we cannot overlook the wealth of insight concerning man's health that this discipline furnishes us. Thus we may disagree sharply with a commonly held opinion in psychiatry, such as the assumption that anxiety is eradicable, without drawing the conclusion that those who hold this view have nothing to offer man in the task of living through anxiety. On the other hand, some psychiatrists regard anxiety as always "restrictive," an interference with life. Yet it does not follow that the task of developing a free and spontaneous self is without anxiety.

The ordinary and universal experience of anxiety suggests that it is unavoidable in life—even necessary. Indeed, our great concern in dealing with the pathology of anxiety seems to have blinded us to its positive role. And psychiatry seems to have ignored that side of the experience largely because of its analytic concern with neurotic problems. This situation may be regarded as temporary, for the insights of psychoanalysis are being rapidly assimilated in other fields. For instance, concern with moral value may be a source of genuine and creative anxiety for man. Some psychiatrists, like Fromm and Horney, have gone beyond the traditional avoidance of this area in psychoanalysis. They have observed that a lack of moral concern adds to the "scatteredness" and "blindness" of modern life.

Anxiety is a part of man's living and deciding. No

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great work of imaginative art has ever come into being without it. As a creative force, it has sparked the souls of saints and poets throughout the ages and is associated with the most profound expressions of the human spirit. But when we speak of creative anxiety, we have in mind something quite different from the pathological anxiety that robs life of its zest and either immobilizes or seriously cripples the functioning of those who experience it. We have in mind an experience like St. Paul's conversion, the "psychotic episode" as some would have it, that broke the bonds of his own exclusiveness and made him brother to "Jew and Greek, bond and free." John Donne struggled to express an experience closely akin to creative anxiety when he wrote of holding back his tears that he

Might in this holy discontent,  
Mourn with some fruit . . . ,

a fruit which grows out of the knowledge that

In mine idolatry what showers of  
rain mine eyes did waste?

### SOME DISTINCTIONS

But together with its creative role as a spur to man's spirit, anxiety plays the negative role of restricting and reducing man's self-realization. The very devices that psychiatry has developed to uncover neurotic anxiety, such as the analysis of the unconscious areas of personality and the critical examination of the subtle influences of life conditions, are also effective ways of viewing the less dramatic, but inevitable, role that anxiety plays in all existence. Almost half a century before Freud, Søren Kierkegaard became concerned with and exposed the unconscious role of "anxious dread" even in the hidden recesses of man's happiness. With consummate skill he laid bare the "infinitely comic" devices that man utilizes to hide his real despair.

This very hidden quality of anxiety explains its per-

vasiveness and constitutes a hazard in making a distinction between the anxiety common to all human living and that which bears neurotic significance. The individual who carries "anxious dread" as the "gnawing secret" of his life is unlikely to seek the help of a psychiatrist. What is more, he will not come to grips with the ultimate meaning of his life. Although his sickness is shrouded and deeply buried within him, he does not escape the consequences of anxiety in his living. That ultimate anxiety takes its toll, as surely as any neurotic impoverishment.

For purposes of this discussion we should now characterize the three functional types of anxiety.

*Primary anxiety*, or the *anxiety of existence*, is that condition of shock that man always experiences on learning, as Pascal put it, "that he is something and that he is not everything." This anxiety accompanies freedom and, in actuality, is transformed into one of the other manifestations.

*Sinful anxiety* is the condition that persists when, under the threat of primal anxiety, man succumbs to the temptation to separate himself from God and experiences, as a result, both loss of freedom and innocence, and guilt under the judgment of God. Operatively, in the unconscious, it attempts to intensify its control and to hide its real object.

*Neurotic anxiety* is that condition that always bears a reference to a distortion in some basic interpersonal relation. It functions operatively outside consciousness through feelings of guilt and hostility, and it attempts by manipulative control to continue the original distortion.

It is obvious that these distinctions between primary, sinful, and neurotic anxiety are possible only in a theoretical discussion. In actual life they are combined, and it would be a rash man who would attempt to separate the various strains. Obviously, some behavior problems are readily explained as having a basis in neurotic anxiety. Yet since every

man experiences primary anxiety, and every man sins, neurotic anxiety is more or less intensified by sinful anxiety. This does not mean that it is impossible to deal with the pathology of neurotic anxiety. But it does mean that in practice no absolute and final distinction can be made between sinful and neurotic anxiety. Hence the patient who constantly complains, "I can never be what they want me to be!", is more than likely suffering from the impossible claims laid upon him by others whose relationship to him has left this residual distortion. Nevertheless, that plea can become an effective screen, behind which the individual hides his own responsibility for what he does with his life. Hence, in this age of psychological sophistication, one learns quite early to substitute "conditioning" for personal accountability. There is profound insight in the cartoon which pictured a small boy saying airily to his father, who is reading an obviously unsatisfactory report card, "Well, Pop, what is it this time, heredity or environment?"

#### **ANXIETY AND EXISTENCE**

What does it mean when we say that anxiety is unavoidably involved in man's existence? Hedged in by physical limitations, illness, and eventual death, man is deeply impressed with the caprice and uncertainty of life. The fact that he is not satisfied with mere animal existence and yet is constantly reminded that his rational capacities are limited, means that man is uneasy in the deepest core of his being. The very awareness of self brings man to the realization of his powerlessness and of the uncertainty of his existence. For to know self-identity is to be acutely conscious of its limitations in that it is always threatened with the possibility of loss and requires painful decisions to maintain itself. Furthermore, it must constantly adjust to the Other. At every point decision and action meet judgment. And from that there is no escape, either in hell or in heaven!

Man's position is unique. His ambiguous nature is the source of both his creativity and his sin. It means that he is able to transcend himself in thought and to experience loving communion with his fellows, but it also means that he knows the bitterness of frustration and despair. Being a child of nature and spirit, he cannot reach integration simply by becoming either pure animal or pure angel. He must live. Even though tempted to deny his spiritual life or to get rid of his natural body, his satisfactions require both; and he is driven to seek unity not only within himself, but also with his fellows, and ultimately with the ground of existence.

His creative effort, however, is always fraught with danger and anxiety. Rejection and disappointment stand ready to frustrate him; and all too frequently, in fear lest they overcome him, he gives up the effort to achieve self-hood and "adjusts" in order to appease the unbearable anxiety that he feels. But psychiatry knows a great deal about such "adjustments" where anxiety is not resolved, but continues to influence man's life outside consciousness. The monotonous sameness, from door-stops to gin labels, that marks the successful man in middle class suburbia is but a thin disguise for the raging despair that has swallowed up selfhood in conformity. As Kierkegaard put it with telling accuracy throughout *The Sickness Unto Death*, worldliness is made up of successful men who are not themselves!

The fullest realization of selfhood is made impossible by anxiety. Yet man never forgets completely the desire for wholeness that self-realization involves. Otto Rank holds that man retains in memory, as a symbol of wholeness, the embryonic state in the mother's womb, where the individual felt himself to be an indivisible whole and, at the same time, to be inseparably related to a greater whole, the mother.<sup>1</sup> Outside the womb the individual strives for whole-

<sup>1</sup> Otto Rank, *Will Therapy and Truth and Reality* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), pp. 185 ff.

ness of personality as a substitute for the totality lost at birth; but now his drive to realize wholeness is beset with a "primal fear," which may appear as a fear of life or as a fear of death. Kierkegaard relentlessly traces this primal fear back to man's inescapable relation to God. He insists that despair is an unwillingness to be oneself as grounded in God. Thus man's despair or anxiety arises out of his ultimate relation to God. But by busying himself with an "outward direction" and "forgetting" the ultimate relation of the self and the Eternal, man avoids coming to grips with the one relation that can resolve his despair, namely, to will in faith to be himself in the eyes of God.

The anxiety peculiar to man's creaturehood dwells in the hidden recesses of his being. Its searching questions are seldom confronted directly, although they contribute to his feeling of disquietude and restless drivenness in life. In our culture the anxious dread that accompanies direct discussion of death or suffering precludes our finding a satisfactory answer. It is a curious irony of civilization that our ability to "grieve creatively" is frustrated by our desire to avoid the fullest acceptance of the facts.<sup>2</sup> Death becomes, in our conversation, "passing on," and suffering is always mentioned in hushed tones.

Fromm has suggested that one source of the flatness of life in general is the suppression of our acknowledgment of tragedy and the fear of death, which live an illegitimate existence among us. And he attributes it to Christianity, which "has made death unreal and tried to comfort the unhappy individual by promises of life after death."<sup>3</sup> This may be true to the extent that the individual Christian participates in the cultural tendency to deny death and to ignore tragedy. But surely the Christian Gospel is founded upon the realistic acceptance of death; and the emphasis of

<sup>2</sup> Erich Lindemann, "Symptomology and Management of Acute Grief," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, CI (1944), 141-48. The phrase "grieve creatively" is Dr. Lindemann's.

<sup>3</sup> Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, p. 245.

its hope is not so much a promise of life after death as of an eternal life that begins *now*, in that entering into the faith community where death "hath no more dominion." Indeed, one might charge the psychiatrist with furthering the very condition he deplores, for it would be naive to assume that the individual alone could face the finality of death without a profound experience of dread and without the temptation to soften its bitterness with sentimentality. Whether a man is to be carried by a "band of angels" or by ancient Cheop's heavenly vessel, he wants to have a passport ready for that journey. Every man knows the meaning of Agog's words as he stood trembling before Samuel: "Surely death is bitter" (I Sam. 15:32 Goodspeed). The bitter taste of death requires healing waters which spring into eternal life. The Christian Gospel does not flee from the reality of death. Rather because of the conviction that resurrection is the means whereby God calls His people, one by one, into the deeper realities of eternal life, the fact of death is faced, and the unfinished business of living is handed over in trust to the ongoing community of inseparable love.

We must remember that the Church lives in a culture that refuses to acknowledge tragedy and cautions man "never to grow old, never to die." Members of the Church are not unaffected by this cultural view. The Church, however, in its corporate life is one of force which presses for a more realistic acceptance of death, even though its people, for reasons not wholly within the power of the Church to alter, choose to ignore its message. The Eucharist, which is offered daily in countless churches, is a perpetual renewal of Christ's "precious death and sacrifice until His coming again"; and the burial service of the Church directs that her sons and daughters be committed to the ground with the words, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust." Christian burial is a "committal"—an acceptance of death—in the faith that whether we live or die we belong to one another in God both in life and in death. By a culture

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that appears to have lost its capacity for faith, this Christian attitude should be counted a mark of health rather than a source of illness.

There is certainly reason to believe that an adequate expression of the depth and tragic fullness of life is missing in our culture. The poets and playwrights are constantly voicing the displacement and loneliness of modern man; but the fact that their expression consists largely in sharing our sense of lost meaning and of man's exile is some indication of our lack of cultural unity. Even the words we use for communication frequently seem to reveal our distance from one another. T. S. Eliot has reminded us of our "imprecisions":

. . . words strain,  
crack and sometimes break, under the burden,  
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,  
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,  
Will not, stay still . . .<sup>4</sup>

One of the words that does not stand still is *sin*. The present generation is familiar with a kind of "emancipated religion" that almost succeeded in cutting the heart out of Christianity by ignoring man's tragic inner destructiveness. It abhorred the word *sin*, made futile efforts to explain away man's moral recalcitrancy, and prescribed "moral imperatives" with wearying repetition. In its effort to adjust faith to modern man, "enlightened" religion mistook sins for sin and shifted the emphasis from man's *being* in faith to man's *doing* in action. To be sure, Christian being and action belong together, but when religion becomes primarily morals, the tragic corruption that springs from the heart of man is either deliberately ignored or banished to the unconscious. It remains, however, to infect man's best efforts. Most of

<sup>4</sup>T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1943), p. 7. Used by permission of the publisher.

us know this, in our innermost being, as the whispered truth. Thus when Job had completed the catalogue of his virtues to thrust in the face of God, he was still unsure of himself. Perhaps, he ponders, God does know the secrets of all hearts:

Oh, that I had the indictment written by my adversary (Job 31.35).

But Job never gets a list of particulars. He must live with the knowledge that all his works can neither purchase heaven nor prove his righteousness. This, too, is a part of man's tragic existence. When his heart is imprisoned in the things he can do and when he forgets that these efforts are partial, his living, as well as his dying, becomes a journey of frustration, fraught with despair. In every pilgrimage there is anxiety. It is the companion of all our years. But that sojourner in our souls becomes a tyrant when man separates himself from God, who is the other abiding companion.

Thus the picture of man's life emerges. Existence involves freedom, and freedom is both possibility and threat. The threat of freedom drives man into separation. He becomes unsure, ambivalent, and divided within himself. He becomes an island unto himself. He stands over against God, who is the source of his freedom and existence. But freedom is also a possibility that suffers from torn and broken relations in the actual business of living. The rejected child soon learns to use his freedom either to "submit" or to "protest." In either case he loses. Here again, it can be seen that, beyond this functional difference, no simple distinction between neurotic and sinful anxiety is possible. The actions of the rejected child may be the result both of his anxiety in rejection and of his anxiety to be in the center of the universe. Here is present in him the temptation to "play God." Anxiety then is a sickness that dwells in the heart. It

is not surprising that it should become attached to so many particular objects. Auden suggests the inexorable logic of this illness and man's ultimate predicament because of it:

. . . All that exists  
 Matters to man; he minds what happens  
 And feels he is at fault, a fallen soul  
 With power to place, to explain every  
 What in his world but why he is neither  
 God nor good, this guilt the insoluble  
 Final fact, infusing his private  
 Nexus of needs, his noted aims with  
 Incomprehensible comprehensive dread  
 At not being what he knows that before  
 This world was he was willed to become.<sup>5</sup>

#### THE ANXIETY BEHIND GUILT AND "GUILT FEELINGS"

Man's anxiety is ultimately that which reveals his unique relation to God. The experience of anxiety marks man as man. For who among the animals goes through life with the feeling of having been expelled from paradise, of having been alienated from that which makes one whole? The very act of existence itself involves man in this alienation. The moment when he realizes his possibility of being and of not being and proceeds to make real his potentiality for selfhood, the anxiety of possibility is translated into the tragic anxiety and guilt of existence. The word *realize* is used here in a symbolic sense. Part of the self may *know* about the anxiety of existence, but that part lies deeply hidden. Thus with endless wit man frets over the things that occasion his anxiety, putting off forever, if possible, his acknowledgment of the fact that he is really in despair over himself and *about* the Eternal. These *things* that occa-

<sup>5</sup> Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*, p. 24. Used by permission of the publisher.

sion his anxiety obscure that which the anxiety is ultimately *about*, namely, the Eternal One, who alone is able to overcome anxiety.<sup>6</sup> One patient, after several years of therapy, came to the conviction that her ultimate anxiety, in which the problems of meaninglessness, death, and guilt were raised, had been displaced by many other life situations which she knew she "could solve, if somehow pressed," but which always seemed to be the bearers of this deeper, illusive anxiety. Thus despair may lie at the roots of man's contradictory existence and wear the mask of pride and hostility simultaneously with that of self-hatred and rejection. Such a person may drink to excess in a vain effort to quiet his anxiety and, by this same action, convince himself of his own "worthlessness." Hence man's deepest needs, under the compulsion of anxiety, may become identified with guilt. And, paradoxically, that guilt will deny those very needs.

The psychiatrist is concerned with guilt feelings more in terms of the function that self-recriminating attitudes serve than in terms of the subject of guilt. Thus Karen Horney holds "that much of what looks like feelings of guilt is the expression either of anxiety or of a defense against it."<sup>7</sup> Freud's classic "Mourning and Melancholia," described the continuance of morbid grief as a displaced guilt feeling motivated by a repressed hostility that in some way was absolved by the individual in grief activity. But if the psychiatrist overlooks the area of real guilt in man's life, he is simply closing his eyes to an important phenomenon in human experience. An "understanding" may relieve a Lady Macbeth of her compulsive hand washing and help her to go on, but her real guilt remains. No amount of "understanding" will resolve this final guilt because its ultimate ground is pride and self-idolatry. There is reason to believe

<sup>6</sup> See Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1946), pp. 97 ff. for a full discussion of this distinction.

<sup>7</sup> Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, p. 235.

that Shakespeare was voicing the Christian view that ultimate healing is the work of the Divine Physician. The doctor, called to attend Lady Macbeth, states:

Foul whisperings are abroad: unnatural deeds  
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds  
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.  
More needs she the divine than the physician.  
God, God forgive us all! (*Macbeth*, V, 1).

Anxiety, though painful, reminds man of his freedom; in a sense we may say that anxiety is the price of freedom. In exercising his freedom, however, man becomes guilty. Man is always tempted by freedom to build a tower of pride over against that which gave him existence. This is man's irresistible temptation "to play God." Guilt follows and, in its wake, hostility and despair. It is interesting to note that in her last book, *Neurosis and Human Growth*, Karen Horney sees the problems of modern man in terms of the Faustian "search for glory" with unhealthy pride as its base.<sup>8</sup> The persistent stories of man's pact with the devil make this a recurrent theme in history. Anxiety accompanies freedom; freedom, in an effort to secure itself, tends toward pride; and pride results in guilt and despair. The author of Deuteronomy pictures the people as "scattered" to the ends of the earth, serving strange gods, but finding neither ease nor rest. Why? Because they did not serve the Lord God "with joyfulness and gladness of heart." Here is a description of the inexorable progress from idolatry to despair, where the glad heart of man becomes a hopeless sigh. Because of his idolatry man is given

. . . a trembling heart, and failing eyes, and  
a languishing soul;  
your life shall hang in doubt before you;  
night and day you shall be in dread,

<sup>8</sup> Karen Horney, *Neurosis and Human Growth* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1950).

and have no assurance of your life.

In the morning you shall say, "Would it were evening!" and at evening you shall say, "Would it were morning!" because of the dread which your heart shall fear, and the sights which your eyes shall see (Deuteronomy 28:65-67).

Now then, guilt is as real as man's pride, and both are nurtured in the inescapable anxiety of existence. Clearly more is involved in the question of guilt than can be explained by regarding it merely as the subjectively felt claims of the culture. No doubt, these forces do exert their influence in guilt feelings. It is important for our understanding of guilt to be aware of the subtle and persistent nature of social pressures. For instance, it should be noted that the identity of the authority behind these claims is vague and indiscriminate: "They think I am a snob." "People will say I'm no good." "All I ever did was to pass my driver's exam." Who makes the claims here? Who expresses the judgment which produces guilt feelings? It is the anonymous voice of others that speaks here. These claims bear no sanction from God, although they may be felt as "religious" imperatives. For, in truth, they are attributable to perfectionism, fastidiousness, or success mindedness. Guilt feelings are the result of destructive claims that probably have become operative in the individual because persons important to him have pressed them upon him. It is a part of health to see that these claims that have been pressed upon us are false claims, alien to our native health. But it is also important to look beyond these claims to the pride and self-idolatry that involve us in unresolved guilt. Indeed we may say that anxiety forces man to choose a way of life. As the inescapable crisis of existence, it offers only the alternatives: in faith and trust to commit oneself to the Creator, or in frantic anxiety to banish God in favor of the self. Thus idolatry is always the temptation of anxiety. When rein-

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forced by neurotic anxiety, it issues in a tragic way of life that is familiar to all of us; and feelings of guilt are the terrible burden of that way.

Man's guilt feelings, therefore, are derived from a number of sources. In actual living, they operate together to render him more or less helpless before the real object of his guilt. Both priest and physician may treat him for a long period before this guilt is exorcized. It is hard to see how any view of life, short of faith, can deal ultimately with the problems of unavoidable anxiety and of real guilt. For these can only be understood and dealt with in religious terms. Self-knowledge gained through psychotherapy may help in relieving neurotic guilt feelings, but the task is unfinished if it fails to find and resolve the deeper source of anxiety. Perhaps it may be said of that demon, as Jesus said of a generation of anxiety-laden people,

Nothing can make this kind come out, but prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29, Moffatt).

### THE TASK OF HEALING

The distinction between real guilt and guilt feelings raises the question of how one becomes aware of their difference. How is the task of healing accomplished? The Bible affirms that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." In placing emphasis on inner attitudes the long history of biblical religion has anticipated modern psychotherapy. St. Augustine put self-searching and self-awareness at the heart of man's effort to know both himself and God. His constant prayer was:

O God, who art ever the same, let me know myself,  
let me know thee.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> St. Augustine, *Soliloquies*, I. II, 1, in *An Augustine Synthesis*, ed. Erich Przywara (London: Sheed and Ward, 1932). Used by permission of the publisher.

This emphasis on self-searching, which has been available for centuries in prayer, worship, and spiritual discipline, has become in modern psychiatric practice a means of explicit help for emotional ills. Thus the patient who is the victim of guilt feelings may discover, with the help of a therapist, the reasons why he is susceptible to distorted claims. The therapist helps the patient to see and help himself. The same patient may also go to church where, through confession and repentance, he will see himself in the eyes of God. Something akin to psychotherapy has been a necessary part of Christian penance and absolution through the centuries. There can be no doubt that, as a tool, it has been shaped with great effectiveness by modern psychiatry. It has made possible eyes that see and ears that hear. It is not, however, a substitute for that seeing and hearing in which man's soul is kept alive.

Alone and separated, even in a crowd, man never discovers himself. His distortions and his guilt, real or imagined, remain undetected. Thus his deepest need is a spiritual one, the overcoming of his loneliness and separation, and this he can accomplish only in association with another human being. Man's health is lost, but it is also regained through the medium of interpersonal relations. Every human association carries the possibility of aiding or of damaging man's health. This means that those who deal with people in their work are agents of therapy, whether they are aware of the fact or not. In medical case histories reference is frequently made to the saving and beneficial effects of one good relationship, be it with nurse, teacher, or minister; but when this one relationship is absent, a report of complete failure and of withdrawal from the arena of life concludes the history.

Granted that the healing of anxiety takes place within interpersonal relations, it should be added that healing also requires a spirit of genuine concern on the part of the

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assisting agent. And this happens when love is the measure of man's desire to help, just as skill is the measure of his ability to help. The original meaning of the verb *to heal* was *to make whole*. He who is healed is made whole again. This, then, is the task of therapy. The very word is derived from the Greek verb *therapeuo*, which means *to attend* or *to care for*. Thus therapy, or the practice of healing, is accomplished within the climate of loving care and genuine concern. Its goal is more than the removal of symptoms. It looks to the renewal of man in his depths. Every step in that direction opens up new possibilities for self-fulfillment as it knocks down the walls of loneliness. The spirit of whole-heartedness, which is the aim and goal of therapy, finds expression in St. Paul's moving hymn to love:

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (I Cor. 13:7).

While it is true that everyone who helps another person to meet a crisis or to solve a problem is involved in therapy, this must not be confused with the work of carefully trained therapists. For the painstaking endeavors of these professional helpers (medical, psychological, and pastoral) is a carefully planned effort to apply knowledge and experience in therapy for the relief of anxiety. This work requires competence and training. It is significant that pastoral counseling, as a refinement of pastoral care, is now receiving some prominence in theological training programs. Here the pastor acquires through study and clinical training something of the "methodical thoroughness" of the trained helper.

Since Freud's day the basic technique in therapy for uncovering the real problems of the subject has been "permissive" talking or "free association," a method which relies on the rule of honesty and on the effort of the subject to report all that comes into his conscious mind. Out of this "free association" come the dreams, fantasies, marginal

thoughts, bodily tensions, and the many other inner pre-occupations that make up the subject matter of discussion; and these are always discussed in relation to the personality of the one seeking help. In psychotherapy much time may be spent in "reliving" and re-evaluating emotionally charged experiences. It may be necessary to "play back" one's life, or to "abreact" as the psychiatrist would say. From clues thus obtained, a more realistic adjustment can be devised for meeting life. The fact that anxiety is largely unconscious and that it is brought into awareness with great pain means that the effort to live beyond it is a prolonged and tedious one. It requires both honesty and uncommon courage.

The aim of therapy is the rediscovery of the self that has been obscured by anxiety. Neither re-education nor rational understanding seem quite as important in achieving this goal as the establishment of a genuine relationship with the therapist. In individual terms the patient strives within this human association to rediscover his at-oneness with others, while at the same time his guilt feelings and self-contempt are progressively undermined. To be sure, a rational understanding of the difficulties in living and of their relation to character structure is important, but the patient can make confident use of these facts only as he gains the conviction that he is accepted. To be of help to one incapacitated by anxiety, the therapist must, of necessity, have a healthy regard for the processes of growth and for human striving for community. When the therapy is concluded, the subject has become a human being who enjoys both freedom and relatedness to others, whose goals are freely chosen, and whose problems in living are more adequately handled by his own native resources.

The end of therapy should be a natural outgrowth of the helping relationship itself, since therapy is aimed at progress toward inner strength in the one helped. Certainly an immediate goal of great importance is the capacity to see other people as they really are. On another level, therapy

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is successful to the extent that it draws the individual back into satisfying group living. The goal of therapy always implies that one gains anew the courage to be himself. That courage comes only through faith. For the Christian it comes as a response to God, "who was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Would it be too much to say that psychotherapy could be a preparation for Christ? It frequently produces a readiness for faith and an expectancy that is fulfilled only in the Church.

### **ANXIETY AND FAITH**

The goal of health looks not for the removal of anxiety, but for its absorption in a positively oriented faith that is outgoing and related to the ground of existence, as well as deeply rooted in present reality. This end is being furthered in our generation by psychoanalysis; but, by their own admission, many psychiatrists are limited in what they can accomplish. Their work, which is largely with the negative areas of personality, leaves many functions of the creative orientation to other forces in man's life. Individual therapy is not possible for large numbers of people; and, unfortunately, most of those who have suffered severely from the pathology of our society can hardly afford adequate medical care, and certainly they cannot afford the professional services of a psychoanalyst.

The answer to this difficulty is two-fold. Society must be sensitized to its growing casualty list of those who are the victims of its malfunctioning: those suffering from economic and personal insecurity, those victimized by its institutionalized prejudice and racial discrimination, and those whose personalities are twisted even before they emerge from youth by the modern obsession for power with its propensity for war. This is a task for government and for education, for church and for home. Its urgency can hardly be overestimated. It is a race between man's ability to adapt himself for his own welfare, and the gathering com-

plexity and self-destructive momentum of mass living. It is a task for all of us.

Second, we must rediscover and strengthen, what Otto Rank called, the "spontaneous therapies" of mankind in religion, philosophy, and art. It is here that most men fight the battle with anxiety in a deeply personal and intimate way. The remaining chapters in this book will be an exploration of the resources in the Christian faith for meeting and dealing with anxiety.

In turning to the language of faith, we should keep in mind that the religious answer is a spontaneous therapy that uses words, relations, and certain symbolic acts as the bearers of meaning, rather than as the deliberate tools of therapy. In this we recall the formulation of William James, that "feeling is the deeper source of religion, and that philosophic and theological formulas are secondary products like translations of a text into another tongue."<sup>10</sup>

"Thy faith hath made thee whole!" This is the perspective of religion: that faith and wholeness are found together. The conviction of modern psychosomatic medicine is that health, in contrast to illness, is found in those who are in communication with the wider areas of the self. This already points in the direction of the religious view that man's wholeness consists in being in touch lovingly with God and with his neighbor.

Therapy must include something more than the analysis of the negative aspects of personality. Some view of wholeness, such as that which finds expression in the interpersonal relation with the therapist and gradually in the wider associations of the individual, is the unfailing component of health. Creativity, love, courage, and faith are qualities that cannot exist as separate entities. They are found together in the whole man whose total orientation is ex-

<sup>10</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: The Modern Library), p. 422. Used by permission of Paul R. Reynolds & Son, 599 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

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pressed by these very qualities. Religious faith may serve as such an orientation. H. Flanders Dunbar, who has done much to open up the field of psychosomatic medicine, pointed out some twenty years ago that religious symbols and techniques are directed primarily toward wholes and, as such, have a distinct role in fostering health.

We may say that religion is involved in two rather fundamental needs of man, both of which are suggested by the term *religio*, if we may interpret the word to mean binding back, being whole again, overcoming shatteredness and disorder. In the first instance religion deals with man's need to realize himself. It is concerned with man's "will to be his own self," to enjoy the fullness of his being. And the degree of selfhood attained is the measure of his freedom and self-respect, and of his ability to act without coercion from without or within. In short, religion is concerned with man's unity. It is assumed, however, that in finding himself man discovers his relation to others and his ultimate relation to God, the ground and source of every relation. This latter discovery is the answer to that other fundamental need of man—namely, to relate himself in wholeness to the deepest source of his being. Freud was forced to deal with this need in what was called an "oceanic feeling." Although he had not experienced this feeling himself and attributed its presence in others to wish fantasies, Freud was forced to admit that many people had described an inner longing for that completely unifying experience which they found expressed only in religious symbols.

The Christian answer to man's anxiety is ultimately cast in terms of faith and loving communion. It is through meeting on this deepest level that, in the New Testament, the sick are healed, the mourners comforted, and the poor inspired with zeal. By such faith the man Saul discovers a new being, and in that communion he is never separated from the love of God. Genuine faith involves more than the acceptance and recital of certain creeds. Man's loyalty and

faith spring from his unreserved participation in that faith community to which in life, as in death, his being is committed as into the hands of God. The reality of that relationship of trust is his source of courage and strength to accept with honesty his own predicament, and yet to live by faith. Job's agonized cry is some measure of the strength of that ultimate trust:

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him (Job 13:15, AV).

The language of faith is symbol and myth. It is indeed difficult for this age, which, despite recent efforts to overcome the gap between mind and body, is still under the influence of Cartesian dualism, to appreciate the very real connection between symbol and reality. On the negative side Freud has accomplished much simply by insisting that obsessive and compulsive acts have meaning. But his prejudice against religion apparently kept him from developing the positive side of his insight—namely, that religious symbols have a creative meaning and function in the total personality. Neurotic symbols, as Rank and others have observed, tend in the direction of ineffectual gestures away from reality; creative symbols, however, are meaningful actions that enhance reality. Religious symbols, whether they be biblical stories or liturgical acts, strive to fulfill the function of creative symbols. They are bearers of a meaning and a truth that can only be expressed through living portraiture and dramatic action. The great stories of the Bible portray God's relation to man by way of analogy. To be sure, it is impossible to portray in any word or story the full meaning of God for man, but the Bible through its account of the mighty acts of God in history and the Church in her liturgy open the way for man to live into and to become part of the community of grace and trust that God has called into being.

Man's affirmation of the great truths of biblical religion—the creation and fall of man, his sin, redemption and salva-

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tion, and Christian life and sacraments—has always been made as an outcome of his wrestling with the realities of life. The threat of anxiety is a part of that reality that is the common concern of every man, as well as of the pastor and the professional helper. In the following chapters we shall attempt to explore the meaning and resolution of anxiety for Christian faith.

*Part II*

ANXIETY AND THE CHRISTIAN  
VIEW OF MAN



## WHAT IS MAN?

“For what are we, my brother?” asks the poet,  
“We are a phantom flare of grieved desire . . .  
A brevity of days haunted by the eternity  
of the earth . . .  
We are a twist of passion,  
A moment’s flame of love and ecstasy . . .  
An almost captured beauty . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Man is haunted not only by the “eternity of the earth,” but also by his lost life, which might have been. The sense of lostness and fugitive wandering that has existed since the days of Cain is heightened by modern man’s excruciating loneliness. The heroic figure who only yesterday expelled God from his world and loudly proclaimed his own emancipation looks in vain for a companion to share his empty victory. His search is fruitless, because in a world of proud individualism the community of sharing has disappeared. What is left? Only nameless crowds, without faces. Those that dwell in the midst of crowds know the depths of that loneliness! Those others that flee into solitude, or into fantasy, find, with Job, only unsettling disturbance, like the fretful sleep of fugitives. This is the reality of man’s life: loneliness and exile.

From this perspective much of modern thought may be regarded as an effort to explain the reason for man’s

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Wolfe, *A Stone, a Leaf, a Door* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1950), pp. 77-78. Used by permission of the publisher.

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discontent. We have searched every nook and corner of God's universe for an answer. We have located the trouble in our institutions, in our economy, even in our religion; but never in man himself. The permanent crisis, however, through which we are living is now tending to shift our attention once more to the crucial question, What is man? This is the inescapable self-knowledge to which we are coming under the hammer blows of modern life. The poets, the playwrights, and the novelists are reflecting our renewed concern with the mystery and paradox that is man. Somehow our common experience has taught us that it is not enough to say that man is shaped by his institutions, propelled by his economic concerns, and patterned by his emotional conditioning. All these things are true, but man is more than the total of these. What is man? He is a center of vitality—a striving, yearning, choosing, and rebelling creature whose final pain and joy is strangely related to that fugitiveness that he feels. For that pain is turned to joy, not through anything he can possess or even do, but through the knowledge arising from faith that his struggle has purpose, that God seeks and finds him in his exile.

### UNITY AND SOLIDARITY

Berdyaev has said that "solitude is a late product of advanced culture."<sup>2</sup> Primitive man lives primarily in and through his social group. Only the advanced societies can afford the radical individualism to which we are accustomed. The ravages of loneliness in our day raise the question that perhaps our zeal for individualism has cost us real living. Shared life is prior to solitude in more respects than is man's evolutionary development. Shared life is the necessary condition within which alone the individual man can develop. It is in his capacity to share—to see, hear, and respond to others—that man's uniqueness is realized.

<sup>2</sup> Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Beginning and the End* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), p. 216.

This capacity to communicate with others throws light on the use of the term *human nature* in the Christian Church. It should in no way imply a fixed entity that is the standard endowment of every human being. The social scientists have demonstrated emphatically that personality structures vary from one culture to another and that the notion of an invariable human nature cannot be supported. On the other hand, if we regard human nature not as a finished product, but as the raw material from which human character is built, the objections seem to be met. Modern psychiatry has taught us not only that the variety of personality manifestation is infinite, but also that, for all these ranges of variation, we are more alike than different. It is that *alikeness*, conceived not in terms of rigid personality inventory, but in terms of the unique consciousness of the human being that is indicated by the term *human nature*. And it is here that the ultimate foundation of human character and conduct is to be found.

Our awareness of the manifold variableness of human character makes it difficult for us to appreciate the way in which Christian theology speaks of man. It should be remembered, however, that the ancient world conceived of humanity in terms of *unity* and *solidarity*, a conception modern thought is only beginning to recover through the insights of psychosomatic medicine and the *wholeness* perspective. Both the Greeks and the Hebrews assumed that every man is represented in any one man and that a whole people could be symbolized in a single figure. But in the biblical view, the unity and solidarity of man is rooted in God as the Lord of all creation. Israel knew Him first as the "God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"—that is, through Israel's personal and concrete experience of that faith. Apart from this community of faith, the individual as such had no status. Through this community of faith, the Israelite not only lived but found completion, his "I" responding to the divine "Thou." This re-

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lation was the source of that continuing renewal recorded in biblical history:

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house;  
they will be alway praising thee.

Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee;  
in whose heart are Thy ways . . .

They will go from strength to strength . . . (Psalm 84:4-5 and 7a).

Berdyaev, who speaks from the ancient tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy, has expressed the view of man familiar to the world of antiquity, the view that is being recovered today:

Man is not a fragmentary part of the world but contains the whole riddle of the universe and the solution of it.<sup>8</sup>

For the Greek, and especially for the Stoic, that “riddle” was associated with the Word, *logos*, the divine light of the “hidden harmony” that shines through every man. Later the Hebraic Christians were to woo their Gentile neighbors with the proclamation that the *logos* had become flesh, and that through the death and resurrection of Christ the way had been opened for all men to be restored to unity with God. It was this sense of unity and solidarity, held by the ancients, that prepared the way for the acceptance of the Christian view of man, his fall in Adam and his redemption in Christ.

### IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

In the Bible man is God’s creature, made in His own image. Man is called by God into being, and his distinctive selfhood is fulfilled only through his freely acknowledged dependence upon God. This essential relationship—the *that*

<sup>8</sup> Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Destiny of Man* (New York: Chas. Scribner’s Sons, 1937), p. 59.

in man which refers back to God—remains, even in estrangement, as a reminder that *to live* is to know God, and to be apart from God *is to be in death*, even in the midst of life.

Lady Blackwell, in T. S. Eliot's play, *The Confidential Clerk*, speaks of the image of God in man when she declares,

. . . of course, there's something in us,  
In all of us, which isn't just heredity,  
But something unique. Something we have been  
From eternity. Something . . . straight from God.  
That means that we are nearer to God than to anyone.<sup>4</sup>

That "something straight from God" accounts for the restlessness in man, which never ceases until he returns to God. The image of God in man seeks responsive expression through his freedom and his selfhood. Indeed, the only full freedom and selfhood man ever knows comes when his life is shaped according to the image of God and lived in relation to God. This is the condition in which man can most truly be himself.

The significance of man's utter dependency upon God is further emphasized in these words from the Genesis account:

Then the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; And man became a living soul (Genesis 2:7, AV).

Man is a "*living soul*," dependent for continuing life upon the breath of God. Without that life-giving breath, he is but a handful of dust. We see here that the emphasis of Hebrew psychology is not upon a dualism of body and soul, but upon "*living soul*" and its opposite, nothingness. For the Hebrew the experience of Ezekiel was universal.

<sup>4</sup>T. S. Eliot, *The Confidential Clerk* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1954), p. 87. Used by permission of the publisher.

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Ezekiel had been ordered, you will recall, to stand upon his feet, but he found that he could not do so until “the spirit entered into” him and set him upon his feet (Ezekiel 2:1-2). In God’s relation to man, creation is continued when man responds to the spirit of God and when that spirit enters and strengthens him. Alone, man is helpless to become what God intended him to be; but neither does God’s plan call for man’s self-annihilation. He becomes himself most fully, that is, a *living soul* in touch with himself and others, only in a faith-trust relationship with God.

### THE IMAGE OF GOD AND ESSENTIAL MAN

“In the beginning God created . . .” Thus begins the biblical account of creation of which man’s creation is a part. In that account he shares in the goodness and in the harmony of creation. Some Christian views posit an “original righteousness” in an historical sense, but it is our understanding that the goodness and the harmony of creation are both present and lost in every man’s experience.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, we have already said that the image of God in man remains even when he is separated from God; it becomes, under this condition, a reminder of that prior harmony. In the story of Adam man’s created wholeness is symbolized before the fall in his innocence. He is pictured as participating unconsciously in that unity of creation, which is, according to one Psalmist, the spontaneous worship of all creation before the Creator:

All Thy works praise thee, O Lord,  
And thy saints give thanks unto thee (Psalm 145:10).

\*This view finds expression in Edward John Bickwell’s paper in *Essays Catholic and Critical*, ed. E. G. Selwyn (London: SPCK, 1950): “It is quite conceivable that there once was a time when the human race was developing on right lines, a period of what we might call, to use the old term, ‘original righteousness’” (p. 222).

The term *image of God* summarizes man's essential endowment at the time of his creation. One might say, indeed, that a full understanding of this term will convey some idea of what God intended for man in the beginning. It may also stand as a symbol of man's true relationship to God, and to himself when he is most truly himself. But how shall we describe essential man?

We have already identified an important aspect of man's being when we used the biblical designation "living soul." This descriptive phrase points up the significance of man's wholeness in creation. It belongs to, and is dependent upon, his relation to God. On the other hand, man's wholeness is shattered and lost when he ceases to have a living connection with God. It is in this sense that the biblical contrast is between faith which is life, and rebellion which is death, rather than between existence and non-existence. Indeed, the Genesis account would lead us to believe that death was not a part of God's original plan for man. It is a sign of the judgment under which man stands in sin. In the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul speaks of the two dominions: that of death bequeathed to us in Adam, and that of new life made possible in Christ. For us, wholeness or salvation constitutes the reality of the new life in Christ. To die means separation and fragmentation. But it should be remembered that the Hebrews had no word for wholeness. Man is either a living soul profoundly in touch with himself through God, or he is dead and set apart from God's vitalizing breath. It is significant that we have been forced in our day to reconstruct the concept of wholeness that is implied in the word *psychosomatic*, and yet the Bible understands and identifies this reality simply as *life*.

Man is a living soul, a part of God's creation—but with a difference. He is set at the head of creation to have "dominion" over it, and he is possessed of a finite freedom and selfhood that he must relate to God. In *The Pillar of*

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*Fire*, a moving account of a spiritual pilgrimage, Karl Stern notes that a certain rabbi insisted that an even more fundamental proposition than “Love thy neighbor,” is “He created man in His own image.” The violence and the degradation that many persecuted groups in modern history have suffered underlines that wisdom. Man is an upright creature who knows the sound of God’s voice, and he cannot be understood as a child of nature, or even as a brother to man, without first acknowledging his relation to God. The Bible pictures man as the only animal that enjoys this relatedness and similarity, that hears and responds to God’s voice. One of the psalmists is moved to ecstasy when he dwells on this aspect of man’s life:

Yet thou hast made him little less than God,  
And dost crown him with glory and honor.  
Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy  
hands (Psalm 8:5-6, RSV).

But this picture of man requires the balance of another psalmist:

I say, ‘you are gods,  
sons of the Most High, all of you;  
Nevertheless, you shall die like men,  
And fall like any prince’ (Psalm 82:6-7, RSV).

Man’s dominion is limited. There are boundaries he cannot pass. His expansiveness is met with the remainder that apart from God he is but the dust of the earth.

Man is made in the image of God, and the glory of that image tempts him to imagine the opposite, that God is the projection of man’s mind. This idolatry makes it possible for man to imagine that he controls God. In this connection it seems significant that the Hebrews had no word for *religion*. Their nearest equivalent is contained in the verse:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10).

For the Hebrew man's essential relation to God is one that keeps him ever mindful that the crucial fact of his existence is his dependence on God; his "liveliness" always refers back to God.

It follows from what has been said that in the biblical view man can be understood neither as an end in himself, nor in relation to nature, but only as a child of God. The humanist counsels man to be "for himself," but the autonomous self is cut off from that judgment and grace which makes newness possible. The experimental psychologist sees man's every movement reflected in the conditioned reflexes of mice and other laboratory animals. But the prophet Jeremiah observed long before, that there is one important difference between man and animal:

Even the stork in the heavens  
    knows her times;  
and the turtledove, swallow, and crane  
    keep the time of their coming;  
but my people know not  
    the ordinance of the Lord (Jeremiah 8:7).

Where the animals "know" and live by the appointed order of nature, man must discover and decide for himself. This act of decision implies both a freedom and distinctive self-hood, those painful realities of his existence that forever tempt him to give up his manhood and to seek release in an animal-like existence. But there is One who is acquainted with all man's ways, One who seeks without haste, without ceasing. The everlasting God lets man go his own way, but He does not let him go alone. He waits for man with a terrible patience. Beyond all fleeing, His voice is hope: "Come again, ye children of men." There comes a time when man "knows," in the words of the Shorter Catechism, that

his "chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

We have been considering the significance of the image of God in man. The vital relation to God that this term signifies is made explicit in the portrayal of the relation of man and woman. It hardly seems accidental (even though the creation of Eve comes as a divine afterthought) that man's life evolves from the beginning as a communal affair. We have it from the Creator Himself that "it is not good for man to be alone." Man is incomplete when he is alone. This truth is amply demonstrated in every study of human relations. Loneliness and isolation are accompanied by the loss of humanity. But what has *not* been demonstrated or emphasized enough, is the fact that every man, even the mythical self-made man, is dependent upon a supporting and responsive community for the barest realization of himself. At the heart of that community is the profound meeting of man and woman, where they become *one flesh* and, under God, begin to complete each other's incompleteness. The meeting and the response, signified by that expression *one flesh*, is another manifestation of man's peculiar endowment, namely, that he is made in the image of God. *Henosis* (*one flesh*) indicates a profound coming together and points in the direction of man's ultimate relation to God, where knowing and being known are comprehended only in the heights and depths of man's being and where faith speaks to the whole man.

#### MAN IN EXISTENCE

Man's endowment in creation finds expression in finite freedom. In essential man that freedom is the means whereby he responds wholeheartedly to God. Response requires freedom and selfhood, for the answering word must come from one who knows himself to be free and individual, though related to God by faith. This is the picture of man before his expulsion from Eden; this is everyman in dreaming innocence: He lives by the word of God. His life is a

spontaneous fulfillment of God's blessing in creation. In psychiatric terms, one might say that essential man is free to *actualize* his freedom. But the *actuality* of man's freedom, in the sense of actual history as we know it, is always accompanied by the loss of innocence. The harmony of creation that man remembers as the effortless capacity to serve God is destroyed from within at the very moment freedom becomes a matter of actual choice. In the instant he is driven to decision by the inevitable dilemma of freedom, man experiences first, anxiety, and then, sin and guilt. His anxiety is symbolized in the tempting words of the serpent that sought to reassure a wavering Eve that the consequence of grasping her own freedom would surely not be death, but the knowledge of good and evil! There is a curious wisdom in the serpent's words, for the disobedience before God that seems to be an inevitable part of man's exercise of freedom issues not in his annihilation, but in his knowledge of good and evil, particularly of his own guilt and shame. And this separation is, indeed, death.

As long as man escapes recognition of his own involvement in guilt, he may attribute his condition to the sin of others or to accident. How many marriage partners live on the assumption that fate has dealt them a cruel blow, in placing them with intolerable partners? While a spouse may be insufferable, he or she represents only part of the decision which created the marital union. The reality of freedom and the necessity of choice forces the inescapable question of personal involvement in every decision. When man is faced with the inevitable fact, not only of his own responsibility in freedom, but also of his own guilt in its exercise, the question *What is man?* becomes a vital concern. That question, applied in the most personal way, involves asking, "Who am I?" The answer is little short of devastating when candor prevails. G. K. Chesterton has remarked that, whatever this question means, it conveys the truth "that I am not myself." When man comes to the conviction that

he is not himself as created by God, he is ready to hear what Chesterton has called the “good news of original sin.” Indeed, that man is not himself—nor can he be apart from God—is good news to those that have felt the weight of hopelessness in man’s effort to save himself.

The dignity of man and his misery have the same root—his radical freedom. He is free to turn away from God. He is free to choose nothingness. But whether his choice be in faith or in separation from God, he must live through the anxiety involved in deciding. That anxiety represents the constant threat of freedom. It is a part of existence. It may be associated with loneliness, or with the fear of death and disease, or simply with the fear of decision. In any case this primal anxiety is “free floating” and lends an atmosphere of disquiet to life, even apart from the transformation of anxiety by sin. Kierkegaard, in equating dread with the possibility of freedom, calls it education for faith, because ultimately dread is answered only in faith. Dread or anxiety is the mark of actual existence, just as innocence and freedom are the signs of created goodness. Kierkegaard understood the profound significance of dread in much the same way in which depth psychology understands anxiety. He wrote: “Dread is a qualification of the dreaming spirit . . . it is different from fear and similar concepts which refer to something definite, whereas dread is the reality of freedom as possibility anterior to possibility. One does not therefore find dread in the beast, precisely for the reason that by nature the beast is not qualified by the spirit.”<sup>6</sup>

The threat of freedom that man experiences as anxiety becomes a temptation to sin. He may wish to give up his freedom or grasp it possessively, but in either case the consequences of his action involve guilt. He can avoid neither the anxiety of freedom nor the guilt involved in its use! Christ has given us a picture of the debilitating agony of

<sup>6</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Dread* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1946), p. 38. Used by permission of the publisher.

this necessity of choice in his parable of the talents. The third man received one talent. In a frenzy of anxiety he buried it in the ground thinking thus to protect his innocence against the day of his Lord's accounting. But he was excoriated for his pains, and all was taken from him. His attempt to escape the threat of freedom was no more successful than Eve's defiance in grasping it. Both experienced anxiety and both succumbed to sin. It is man's freedom that makes history possible, that makes the fulfillment of self-hood a desirable goal of living, and sin a fact of existence. The paradox of man's life is that in his anxiety to avoid guilt he becomes guilty. In terms familiar to psychiatry, anxiety creates the very condition it wishes to avoid. But this anxiety of existence cannot be avoided. Neither therapy nor education can hope to remove the necessity of facing up to this basic anxiety. It is a part of man's finitude, for this irreducible apprehensiveness is rooted in the fact that man belongs both to the finite world that changes and to the infinite world that remains. Moreover, this apprehensiveness can easily be transformed by sin and guilt into the compulsive and specific anxiety that stalks man's life. It is not man's finitude, nor his dependence as such, that tempts him to sin, but his anxiety about them. Anxiety is the soil that breeds sin, but it is not identical with sin. The possibility remains that faith can control the anxiety of finitude. That possibility must be considered against the reality of man's "untrustingness." Faith prepares man for trust, but anxiety keeps him suspended between holding back and yielding; so like the child in Robert Frost's poem who was caught in the sudden recoil of a tree branch, he falters helplessly between his fear and his pride:

I had not taken the first step in knowledge;  
I had not learned to let go with the hands,  
As still I have not learned to with the heart . . .<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Robert Frost, "Wild Grapes," *New Hampshire* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1923), p. 49. Used by permission of the publisher.

## FALLEN MAN

A recurring sentiment throughout the Book of Job takes the form, "I loathe my life . . ." These words strike a responsive chord in that they express a deeply felt resentment against life as it is, a resentment that appears to be universal. Even Porcupine, of comic-strip fame, hoped that his vacation would make a new man of him, because he didn't like the old man. Kierkegaard weaves a delightful parable around a single lily which came to bloom in a lovely valley.<sup>8</sup> That lily, beautiful as only nature fashions beauty, became dissatisfied with itself when a chattering bird claimed that the lilies in another meadow were even more beautiful. Finally, in desperation, the lily persuaded the bird to pluck it up by the roots and to transplant it into that more desirable place. Deprived of its life-giving soil, however, the lily died en route. Now such a story is foolish, the author concludes, when it concerns a lily, because lilies do not do such things. But men do! They are forever rejecting their lot, forever refusing to be themselves.

The refusal to accept himself as God has made him, and the life-long striving to make himself over in terms of his own prideful image is the characteristic of man. In this sense disobedience before God is man's original and continuing sin. He refuses to be himself as a child of God, and that disobedience is his downfall. The Bible has pictured the fall of man in the simple, but profound, story of Adam and Eve. Even before the act of eating the fruit, something was amiss in paradise. Eve savored the fruit before she tasted it, and Adam was near enough to smack his lips! Man's fall cannot be adequately pictured in an act of disobedience, for it is an inner rebellion before it becomes an actual fact. Ultimately, the Christian view is a paradox that recognizes that sin must in some way posit itself, for

<sup>8</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *The Gospel of Suffering and the Lilies of the Field* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1948), pp. 178 ff.

even in innocence the presence of anxiety suggests that man is already in sin. The fall of man means the loss of that harmony in which he was created and a contradictory existence in which anxiety is the driving force, an anxiety that alternates between pride and guilt, hostility and despair.

The story of Adam and Eve is the biblical way of accounting for man's fallen existence and his remembered innocence. As we have seen, this poetic way of picturing man's fall has a significance which goes beyond the act of Eve's eating the forbidden fruit. It is a picture of what happens to every person, again and again. Bishop Gore thus interprets this:

We are fallen by our iniquity. Thus Adam and Eve stand for every man and woman, and the story of their fall is the true story of humanity and of what has been its ruin in every individual case.

It is interesting that Freud, in his studies of human behavior, also produced a myth that helped him understand man's ambivalent actions. Freud postulated an original murder of the father of the clan by sons who coveted their father's wives. Consequently, every child experiences both a forbidden desire and a resultant guilt, which Freud has called the Oedipus complex.

Apart from its incestual setting, but seen with Freud's broad view of sex in mind, the fall of man, as pictured in psychoanalysis, appears to have much in common with the biblical picture. In both, man's ambivalent behavior is regarded as having its origin in an unwillingness to accept the givenness of one's self as a child (and not the parent or God) and in rebellious action that results in feelings of guilt. It would seem that Freud never connected his final theory of anxiety, wherein the anxiety arises from a deeply hidden "death instinct," with his postulation of the Oedipus complex. But they are consistent in that the logical end of radical

rebelliousness in both is self-destruction and a preference for death (even though it be slow death in living), rather than an acceptance of the givenness of life. The individual vows that he will be all or nothing; he becomes a Nietzschean "superman," defiant of the gods! From this side, guilt feelings become a restraining and protective screen against an uncompromising self-will whose possession of the parent is only one step along the road either to complete dominance or to death. Anxiety remains the whispered truth in the depths of man's soul that his assertion of himself is fraught with inescapable dangers. In the biblical view, as in the Freudian, that anxiety is easily transformed into a compulsive force that robs man of his freedom.

For the Christian, rejection of the self that is given means an unwillingness to accept the self in relation to God. Sin is disobedience before God, a turning away from the source of life. When this takes place, a man busily endeavors to "prove his own life by much work, by cleverness, or by a constant running away to forget. From the riches of her clinical experience, Frieda Fromm-Reichmann gives us this comment on one who felt essentially worthless:

A person who felt worthless and hated in his childhood may, more or less, purposely behave in an offensive way in later years, namely, insolently, in order to arouse hatred for his behavior. It is more bearable to feel hated for what one does than for what one is.<sup>9</sup>

It is this deeply felt anxiety about *what we are* that hurts most. It stands behind our feverish activities, undermines our satisfactions, and betrays an emptiness in much of our "doings." Those that seek help in counseling complain frequently that neither their work, nor their marriage, nor their hobby "makes any difference." The reality of their

<sup>9</sup> Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, *Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), p. 53.

lives remains a poor substitute for the dreams they cherish. Many who never seek help and never give up the illusion that life's emptiness will be redeemed by some windfall, look forward with mounting desperation to what tomorrow may bring. A character in a recent popular novel kept saying to herself bitterly, "There must be something more than this!"

That "something more" comes not as the product of what man does, but of what he is. What we are determines what we do. *Being* precedes *doing*, and modern man is frustrated in the effort to reverse this relationship. He learns too late that he cannot become a new person by following "five easy rules for living," or by changing his brand in life's trivia, or even by "trying hard." The anxious man has become convinced that the underwriting of his deepest happiness lies outside his God-given self in someone else, or in what he can do, or in what he can possess. The truth is, however, that none of these things can "make any difference" if at heart man has lost faith in himself as the beloved of God. The confidence of Christian man springs from that renewing love which accompanies the conviction that although of ourselves we remain unchanged, it is by the inexplicable gift of Christ that we become "new beings." In that confidence a man may find himself—his whole self as intended by God. Without faith man never knows the meaning of wholeness. He genuinely becomes himself not by achieving certain goals, but by recovering through faith and trust that wholeness which is always his when he is in touch with God.)

In the developing program of Christian education in the Episcopal Church, it has been found helpful to meet with small groups of lay people over a weekend and to discuss with them the place of the parish in Christian nurture. Frequently, the discussions during such a conference are climaxed by a mock drama in which the type of problem

that a troubled Christian frequently encounters is made the theme. Out of one such recent discussion this hypothetical personality emerged:

Mr. I. W. Hooper, an inactive member of the parish, faces a crisis when he fails to receive on his job a promotion he desires. His failure to win this crucial advancement takes on the character of desperation, and he is now on the road to becoming an alcoholic. Last night a member of the parish met Mr. Hooper in town and found him in a helpless state of drunkenness. This friend took him home and promised to call on him the next day. The question facing the concerned Christian is how he may use his contact with Mr. Hooper in such a way as to convey Christian acceptance and grace. The caller knows that Mr. Hooper is in his middle years, married, and the father of two children who have recently married and established their own homes. Further, it is known that neither Mr. Hooper nor his wife attends church regularly, although she has been active in several church organizations. Discreet inquiries disclose that Mr. Hooper has tended to depend heavily on social and economic status for his self-esteem and that his wife has complained bitterly from time to time that "he lives for his work and for nothing else!"

Mr. Hooper presents a great challenge to the average churchman, because he so evidently seems "to need something to hold on to," or "to have a job where he can forget his problems," or "to be made to feel important again." While all these prescriptions may be relevant, if they are actually employed in Mr. Hooper's case, they come dangerously close to the manipulation of one person by another; and they are likely to leave that gentleman with the conviction that his ultimate relation to Christian life rests in the hands of these successful, though obviously less humble, churchmen.

At the heart of Mr. Hooper's problem is the fact that he cannot believe that God accepts him because God created

him. He has striven to win his own self-esteem by what he can do and by what he can possess. It is likely that this way of estimating his own worth dates from earliest childhood and that the unreasonable claims of other people have helped to magnify the problem. In other words, it must be admitted that there is some pathology here; but in view of the universal nature of the anxiety behind such behavior, it can hardly be considered unique. Mr. Hooper's deepest need is the recovery of his humanity, a recovery that can neither be purchased nor manufactured by his own efforts. It must come as a free gift. If this man is to be restored to himself, it will be through a new relation to those that are able to give to him of themselves. Where anxiety has been resolved in faith, that kind of "gift-giving" is present; and we recognize it as one of the marks of the true Church.

It is significant that in the actual performance of this mock drama the one that plays the part of I. W. Hooper has usually resisted every effort on the part of his callers to manipulate him by prescriptions, but has responded only in those instances where the visitors offered a simple human relationship without any strings attached. It would seem that, to some extent, all of us share Mr. Hooper's dilemma and perhaps, for that very reason, know that we shall not be helped by one that is anxiously trying to prove himself. When that anxiety is present as a compulsive force, the individual has already lost the self that he is striving to preserve. The effort to secure the self under the compulsion of anxiety succeeds only in alienating the self and in destroying the ground of its security and being in God.

We live under the impact of the fall of man. Insofar as we can stand off and view it at all, we do so through faith and in Christ. Indeed, it is only within the strength of that relationship that man has the courage to face his own sin. Every perspective is a fallen one. But man is not without hope so long as the image of God remains. For that image is a promise that is always finding fulfillment when broken

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and lost men turn from their anxious ways to the quiet strength and wholeness that is theirs before God.

### **VIEWS OF MAN**

We have set forth throughout this chapter the view that the crucial factor in the understanding of man's problem is his freedom. Although he is conditioned in many ways, man is still a creature of freedom and of inescapable decision. He is more than inert matter. His own will is a part of every action. If his life is a paradox, the decisive forces that shape that riddle must be sought within, not outside, man. It is equally true that since man's every perspective is a fallen one, he has an indefatigable propensity to locate the cause of his trouble in someone or something else. There is humor, as well as pathos, in Adam's effort to hide his own sin by blaming Eve. But that lady recovered quickly enough, and a hapless serpent was saddled with the blame!

The fact that Adam hid from God is symbolic of man's effort to escape responsibility for his own sin. Every view of human nature represents something of man's endless search for some other reason for his real condition. Hence, those that say that man is "nothing but" an animal, disregard the claims of the spirit and concentrate on man's animal-like-ness. On the other hand, those that regard man exclusively in terms of his mind or spirit conveniently forget the vital demands of the body. Either view, whether secular or quasi-Christian, leaves man certainly less human and the pawn of forces outside himself. The biblical view of man stands in contrast to either of these fragmented outlooks. In it man is fashioned in the image of God, and yet, apart from his relation to God, he remains but the dust of the earth.

Many within the fold of Christianity place less emphasis on the fall of man. They regard its consequences as less serious than does the view presented here. This is true particularly of those moral theologians whose concept of man suggests an orderly relation between nature and grace.

They deny the profound tragedy of the fall, since any admission of a radical break in man's relationship would preclude the necessary transition in their doctrine from man in nature to man in grace. Man's essential wholeness, they claim, is continuous and unbroken. Grace is simply the completion of the natural by divine action. And the fall is only a regression to a lower level, without impairment of man's essential goodness. One indication, in this view, that humanity has suffered no profound disruption is the tendency to regard man as able to do the good that he knows. Moral theology then becomes a codification of answers to behavior problems, answers that all too often are shallow and ready-made. Thus it would seem that the *a priori* solutions for human problems, offered by some casuists, betray an unconscious Pelagianism, that is, a denial of man's inability to live by moral rules. William Temple has noted this tendency in Thomism (if not in St. Thomas Aquinas himself) to underestimate "the awful pervasiveness and potency of sin" in all departments of human life, and he adds:

. . . the suggestion is easily given that if we can find the right spiritual and psychological technique for remedying what we have seen to be wrong, we can put ourselves right with God.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast to this view there is the biblical realism of St. Paul and prophetic Christianity, which insists that the fall is a radical disruption that reaches to the very roots of man's nature. In the fall man turns from God and loses his soul. Henceforth his life is motivated not by service to God, but by slavery to his own pride and anxiety. That slavery will not be broken either by "good intentions" or "good advice." The words of Luther's great hymn sound the depths of man's need of redemption:

<sup>10</sup> Quoted by Canon A. E. Baker in *William Temple and His Message* (Penguin Book, 1946), p. 60.

Did we in our own strength confide,  
Our striving would be losing;  
Were not the right man on our side,  
The man of God's own choosing.

A secularized version of this liberal view of man appears also in the thinking of those that make scientific method a philosophy of life. They seem to assume implicitly that an underlying harmony (or structure) of nature will reassert itself if the distortions of living conditions and, in some cases, the counsels of "antiquated religion" are removed. This combination of a rather light view of man's basic problems together with an antagonism to religion was characteristic of the early thinking of psychology. It is relatively absent in the thinking of psychiatry today, although some shock was created not long ago by the extreme statement of an eminent psychiatrist who warned against, what he called, "the artificially imposed inferiority, guilt and fear," fed by parents, teachers, priests, and "others with a vested interest" and urged that these be thrown off in order to have a lasting peace.<sup>11</sup> But in general, psychiatry has moved in the direction of limiting its general prescriptions for mankind's problems and of profoundly appreciating the ambivalence in man that complicates the throwing off of deep-seated attitudes.

In this connection, Christian thinkers will certainly admit that parents, teachers, and priests have it within their power to use their relation to children and others for neurotic ends. They participate, however, in a culture that tends to

<sup>11</sup> G. B. Chisholm, "The Reestablishment of Peacetime Society," in *Psychiatry*, IX (1946), 1-11. Dr. Chisholm seems to think that the crying need for this atomic age is "freedom from moralities . . . to think." The evil authorities who sell "poisonous certainties" and "artificially imposed inferiority" must be replaced by liberated thinking. Dr. Gotthard Booth in commenting on Dr. Chisholm's paper says, "It remains to be seen whether the substitute of the atomic bomb for old-fashioned hellfire will make people more responsible." ("Anxiety Concerning Disease," a paper presented to the Seminar on Religion and Health, Columbia University, New York, November, 1946.)

use any relationship for neurotic purposes. The Christian understanding of man, too, may be held in rigid terms and used to control others, just as medical knowledge may be exploited to dominate others. But the fact that the Christian understanding of man may be misused does not make it an "artificially imposed" burden. It is an insight that arises from an awareness of man's serious disruption in existence and his tragic division in sin.

In the Christian view of man, anxiety is that which distorts the original harmony of creation. Sin and guilt accompany the leap into existence, and man's life is marked by tragic ambivalence. His contradictions cannot be removed simply by letting the harmony re-establish itself. His wound is much too deep. In this connection it is interesting to note that most psychoanalysts appear to have abandoned the earlier view that the analyst exercises no direct control in the analysis and that therapy proceeds simply by the process of letting the harmony of nature reassert itself. Most analysts now agree that they have a responsibility to guide in some measure the course of the analysis. It is clear that any helper must go beyond the rule of "letting nature take its course," even though in most cases "nature" is on the side of health. The analyst that becomes concerned for the welfare of his patient beyond his consulting room because there is not a community that will support and sustain the changed person, has already moved in the direction of a more profound understanding of man's tragic condition. Psychiatry has been particularly successful in searching out the causes of man's illness. Its next task is to strengthen the hand of any force that makes for freedom and wholeness in the totality of man's living.

#### THE ROLE OF ANXIETY

The fact is that anxiety is at the base of man's life. It is always there, tempting man to reject the givenness of his existence and to build a fortress around himself against the

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world. It is anxiety that distorts the "Christian understanding" into a way of controlling others, as Dr. Chisholm justly observed; but anxiety will also distort any other interpretation since the anxious person always is driven, in all he undertakes, by his own insatiable need for security. A doctrine or a theory is easily converted into a "weapon" in the service of anxiety. What much scientific thought does not seem to recognize fully is the ineradicable character of anxiety. Indeed, the very multiplication of therapies for anxiety in our age is one indication that man is frantically searching for "balm" to heal this deep wound. In some ways our condition is like that of the late Middle Ages, when anxiety accompanied the break-up of the medieval synthesis and the people turned to pilgrimages, adorations, and indulgences in a desperate search for salvation. There was the same driving motive then to reduce therapy to techniques and thus to lay hold of salvation and to assuage anxiety. Today, this anxiety is evident in the loneliness of the individual and in the lack of real community life. Paul Tillich has written of this estrangement in modern man as follows:

Modern man has a profound feeling of estrangement or self-alienation from his genuine and true being, of enmity within himself and within his world, of separation from the ultimate source of being and meaning.<sup>12</sup>

Otto Rank observed the same "fear of being alone, of loneliness, the loss of the feeling of kinship with others, finally with the all," which compels man to flee before life and seek stable ground, even illusory stability, in neurotic behavior and frantic activity.<sup>13</sup>

If we keep in mind the universality of anxiety, the force

<sup>12</sup> Paul Tillich, "Estrangement and Reconciliation in Modern Thought," *Review of Religion*, IX (1944), 5.

<sup>13</sup> Otto Rank, *Will Therapy and Truth and Reality* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), p. 155.

of Freud's second anxiety theory gains renewed authority. It will be recalled that dynamic psychiatry reacted against certain mechanical aspects of Freud's thought. In an attempt to correct this, it introduced the cultural setting and the interpersonal factor that Freud had strangely ignored in the formulation of his instinct theories, though he certainly utilized them in his clinical work. But there is an implicit assumption in much dynamic psychiatry today that "man's nature, his passions, and anxieties are a cultural product."<sup>14</sup> Now if such a view means that it is in the interpersonal relations of culture that man experiences *anxiety* and *security*, this cannot be denied. But if by "cultural product" it is meant that the culture determines man's nature, as well as providing the opportunity for its expression and molding, it would seem that a new mechanism has replaced the old. Certainly, anxiety is affected by the cultural setting, but its deep-seated character goes beyond the determination of it by cultural manipulation.

For these reasons, it would seem that actually Freud's second theory of anxiety, which relates to the trauma of birth, is more profound than the views of those critics that retain the weakness of his mechanistic approach when they substitute culture for the sex instinct. Rank pointed the way to a solution with his theory of birth trauma. The traumatic feelings that accompany birth, according to his theory, remain operative throughout life, sometimes as a fear of life, again as a fear of death. Indeed, Rank believed that the fear of birth anticipates the fear of death, and that together these fears pervade life. Freud, while rejecting some elements of Rank's theory, held, nevertheless, that the anxiety associated with birth, by virtue of the helplessness of the infant, is a proto-type of the inescapable helplessness of existence itself, and thus a picture of anxiety in later life. But Freud went further. In his characteristic manner he assumed that

<sup>14</sup> Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, p. 13.

man veils the self-destructive impulse that arises from this helplessness in an aggressive drive against others.

For the Christian view of man, it would seem significant that anxiety is related to the helplessness of the infant at birth. Here is a moment when cultural factors are reduced to a minimum and the elemental factors of birth are universally applicable. It is true, of course, that the primal anxiety of life is intensified or reduced by the cultural and personal ways in which the child is treated after birth. A permissive Okinawan mother, who never allows herself to be separated from her child, produces a less anxious child than an "enlightened," but exacting, western mother, who gives over her child to a rigid and antiseptically sterile nursery. But this does not mean necessarily that the shock of birth and the anxiety of the infant at this moment is any different in one case than in the other. The elemental fact of anxiety corresponds to the elemental experience of birth, and both are inescapably involved in existence itself.

There seems to be a great deal of merit in the suggestion of Rank that the protective experience of the child before birth exercises great symbolic influence throughout life. The importance of the cult of The Blessed Mother in every major religion appears to be related to a deeply felt human need to secure again the experience of wholeness in the womb. In a striking passage in his book, *The Agony of Christianity*, Miguel de Unamuno tells of visiting, on St. Bernard's day in 1922, a Trappist monastery and of arriving during the singing of the impressive chant to Our Lady. He calls the chant a "cradle song" for disbirth, and he describes the monks as "surging backward, returning to infancy, gentle infancy, finding again on their lips the celestial taste of maternal milk," slipping back "to the sleep of the unborn."

#### SUMMARY

In his own heroic way Dietrich Bonhoeffer struggled, during the months just prior to his execution by the Nazis,

with the question that has been the theme of this chapter. Out of that struggle came a prayer the conclusion of which was:

Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.

Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am Thine! <sup>15</sup>

The crisis of existence is made concrete whenever man confronts that question. For therein man is faced with the inescapable choice between the alternatives: Either to rebel against the Godgivenness of his own being and anxiously to strive to purchase another self in pride, or to live by faith and trust in God. There is no magic word whereby to escape the threat of anxiety, but there is a confidence that comes of knowing Him, who has pierced the darkness from the other side.

<sup>15</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, trans. R. M. Fuller (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951), p. 15.

## MAN AS SINNER

When William of Sens, the prideful craftsman in “The Zeal of Thy House,” finds himself at death’s door and protests that his only sins—those of the flesh—have already been confessed, the archangel Michael confronts him:

“There where thy treasure is  
Thy heart is also. Sin is of the heart.”

“But,” William objects, “all my heart was in my work.”  
“Even so,” Michael replied.<sup>1</sup>

The blindness of William in thinking that his own involvement in sin went no deeper than an occasional yielding to the flesh, although his pride was magnified in his work, dramatically portrays the way sin masks its role in man’s life. Pride eludes scrutiny by shifting the emphasis from what one *is* to what one *does*, as Christ demonstrated in His parable of the Pharisee. Man is a sinner; and sin is of the heart. As long as one thinks only of what he does or can do, clothing his own actions with praiseworthy motives, he avoids the necessity of facing the deepest knowledge of himself. The New Testament states the matter with unmistakable clarity:

If we say we have no sin,  
We deceive ourselves,  
And the truth is not in us (John 1:8).

<sup>1</sup> Dorothy Sayers, “The Zeal of Thy House” in *The Questing Spirit*, eds. Halford Luccock and Frances Brentano (New York: Coward-McCann, 1947), p. 503. Used by permission of Miss Sayers.

In the previous chapter we presented the biblical view of man's creaturehood. We found his life to be a curious paradox, reflecting both the goodness of God's creation and the evil that is made manifest in actuality. For anxiety is the mark of finite freedom; and the fall of man accompanies his leap into existence. The primal anxiety, which is present in innocence, is translated into tragic anxiety and guilt. Spontaneous harmony is replaced by compulsive activity. Man has become a sinner, for sin is the act of turning away from the essential harmony with God under the threat of anxiety. It involves separation from the ground of existence, and surrender of the self to the tyranny of sin. It is sin because, ideally, faith could still the anxiety of existence by holding fast to the essential unity of man with God. Actually, as we pointed out in our discussion of the Genesis story of the fall, anxiety and sin are present before man is even aware that he has lost that innocence.

There are striking similarities between this classical Christian view of man's condition and some contemporary views of man put forth by humanistic psychology. Fromm, for example, develops the thesis that man experiences anxiety as he emerges from an original oneness with man and nature to the realization of his own freedom. In this anxiety he attempts to escape from his freedom by giving it over to new authorities. At this point, it is held, man's only alternative to his enslavement by this anxiety is to unite himself again with man and nature on a higher level, the level of spontaneous love and creative work. The Christian view, also, regards freedom as an occasion of anxiety, for it bears the possibility of peril, as well as of promise. Here, too, the solution is through a re-establishment of harmony, but in terms of faith. The similarity of these views, however, ends here; they cannot be equated. For the former attempts to explain man's anxiety as the product of his conditioning, which, since man is primarily a rational creature, may be eventually resolved by a new and more adequate under-

standing. The latter looks upon anxiety as an inevitable component of man's freedom, which has been destroyed from within by man's own act of separating himself from God. His freedom will be restored, and his anxiety resolved, not by anything he can do, but by his responding in love through faith to what God has done in Christ. The one view is called scientific (although its assumptions appear to have ultimate or religious significance), because it follows the discipline of science and works from the proposition that man's condition may be attributed to eventually controllable factors, such as historical and cultural circumstance. The other view is a frankly religious outlook that sees in the crisis of freedom and anxiety an enduring threat through which all men must live, regardless of the accidents of their historical condition. Moreover, the Christian holds that man is deeply wounded by his own separation in sin and that his health requires more than treatment for his maladjustment. Man as sinner is *sick unto death*. He will be healed only by that which, beyond the brokenness and lostness of his existence, restores him to a living relation to God. It is in this view of man as sinner, that Christian faith charts the tragic consequences of man's fall under the temptation of anxiety.

#### SIN AND AMBIGUITY

The origin of sin is inextricably bound up with the ambiguity of man's relation to himself and to his world. In self-consciousness he is able to observe himself somewhat objectively and to assess the world in which he lives. He is free, in some ways, of both and yet he is bound to each. He is unique in that he can look beyond himself; yet he remains a child of his own time and circumstance. Essentially, he participates in and possesses the innocence of God's good creation, but actually, his existence is marked by sin and guilt. So long as his innocence remains and he retains the harmony of his being, sin and guilt are not manifest in him; but at the moment the possibility of actualizing his

freedom presents itself, his primal anxiety is transformed into tragic anxiety, and he is prompted to sin. As Professor David Roberts of Union Seminary has pointed out in a paraphrase of Kierkegaard, a prohibition, such as that in the Genesis story of the fall, "merely induces dread because it awakens the possibility of freedom—a being able to do what, whether good or evil, he [man] does not yet know."<sup>2</sup>

Sin accompanies the act of taking over one's own freedom. It is an act propelled by anxiety, but the resulting sin is more than a simple equivalent of the primary drive. Anxiety is the condition, the spiritual climate, that nurtures sin. But it is a mistake to apply causal connections here. Indeed, the social scientist who "explains" the sinful behavior of man merely by disclosing the occasions of anxious strain is guilty of disregarding the freedom of man. For man has the freedom to transform the occasions of sin—occasions that are not necessarily sinful in themselves—into compulsive anxiety. Indeed, at the heart of man's sin is rebellion against the necessity of decision in freedom. Man rejects the givenness of his humanity, since it involves freedom and requires a response for realization; he flees from his manhood and envies the animal. It is this rebellion—and not the anxiety that is concomitant with freedom—that produces a twisted humanity, whose lost purpose is evident in

Ears that hear not,  
Eyes that see not,  
Tongues that speak not  
The glory of God made manifest!

Man is more than an object determined by outside forces. His capacity for freedom and choice together with his memory and his ability to anticipate consequences is evidence that he is not simply bound to the law of nature. Yet man is a dependent creature. The same factors that are

<sup>2</sup> David Roberts, "The Concept of Dread: A Review Article," *Review of Religion*, XI, 3, 276.

necessary to the life of other animals—air, food, water, etc.—are necessary conditions for his life, also. And his days, like those of the other animals, are numbered. Man is dependent, however, in a deeper sense. He cannot fulfill his life simply by existing. He is dependent upon community and the ability to communicate with others, and upon the experience of communion at every level of his existence. He needs more than himself to complete himself; but, as we have seen, his great temptation is to throw the whole justification for his existence outside himself. Man is a creature that must constantly repent, in his self-inflicted solitude, for the violence he has done to his necessary relation to others and to God. He can neither “go it alone,” nor “sign over” his freedom, although anxiety tempts him and sin propels him in both directions. He must find the fulfillment of his freedom and selfhood in the acceptance of his dependency and in the exercise of his freedom in relation to God. This basic ambiguity together with its consequences in terms of man’s fall, sin, and redemption is a crucial element in the Christian view of man.

#### ORIGINAL SIN

Man’s original and continuing sin is that he has “exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever!” (Romans 1:25). To be a sinner is not only to separate oneself from God, but also to worship a false god and, ultimately, to worship and serve a thinly disguised image of the self. Sin is more than self-centeredness or egotism. It is rebellion against God and worship of the self. Man cannot be indifferent to God. He either worships God and accepts dependence on Him, or he defies God and worships himself. It is in this sense that Christ, the revelation of God, becomes a scandal to every man who is in sin. For in that crucial encounter man is judged, and his idolatry revealed.

The Christian doctrine of original sin has been of genuine service to man in his understanding of himself. It is "good news" to those whose struggle in sin leaves them bewildered about moral failure. There is democracy in its inclusiveness. For not only those who "sin," not alone the "sinful," but *all* men are sinners. That truth speaks to the deepest truth in every heart. It is significant that the doctrine of the fall and of sin, implicit in the Genesis account, is an afterthought, a sign that man was growing increasingly conscious of the fact that human existence is contradictory. The doctrine itself reflects this growing consciousness in the fact that the fall is not simultaneous with creation. There is a paradise and an expulsion from it; and man, in reflection, "remembers" his created goodness and harmony by contrasting it with his present broken existence. Thus the Christian doctrine affirms the goodness of creation of which man is a part and faces up to the fact that created harmony is lost in the fall. The Greek dichotomy between flesh and spirit is avoided, because, whether in his essential or existential condition, Christian man acts, not through a part, but through the totality of his being. He cannot be understood simply in terms of flesh or spirit. Accordingly, the Christian asserts that the depth of man's sin is more profound in this view than it would be in a view that attributed it to the remaining vestiges of "ignorance" or to the "primitiveness" in man.

Like every human concept, "original sin" has been used in the service of other prevailing ideas. A literal interpretation of the biblical story and an enthusiasm for causal connection has twisted it, in many cases, to mean that the sin of Adam has been inherited from generation to generation. This mechanical view has been the subject of countless theological controversies in the Christian Church and, we would suspect, an issue of great concern to many "troubled consciences" today. Without going into the controversy, we may say that a good company of Christian thinkers today

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regard sin as *original* only in the sense that Adam was both himself and the human race, and became, therefore, the bearer of that solidarity that the ancient world knew. In this view it is held that, as a symbol, "original sin" represents what actually happens in the experience of every man. Kierkegaard has pointed out that the Greek Church calls original sin "the sins of the fathers," a characterization that can refer only to a historically concluded fact, but leaves room for the understanding of sin as a condition arising directly in each individual.

Sin is rooted in man's finite freedom, as we concluded in the previous chapter. In the possibility of freedom man succumbs to anxiety and becomes guilty. But guilt does not come as a necessity; it can arise only in the case of a man that is free in his essential nature. Man incurs guilt precisely because he is free to sin. Here is one of the unresolved paradoxes of Christianity, for it postulates that man remains responsible even while he is driven to sin in existence. On this problem of sin and man's responsibility, Reinhold Niebuhr writes:

The actual sin is the consequence of the temptation of anxiety in which all life stands. But anxiety alone is neither actual nor original sin. Sin does not flow necessarily from it. Consequently the bias toward sin from which actual sin flows is anxiety plus sin. Or in the words of Kierkegaard, sin presupposes itself. Man could not be tempted if he had not already sinned.<sup>3</sup>

### SIN AND GUILT

Man becomes guilty, but not by necessity. His guilt is evidence that in the fall man does not cease to be man. His freedom and creativity remain, even during his servitude to sin. They are changed, however, by the tragic anxiety of

<sup>3</sup>Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), I, 250. Used by permission of the publisher.

existence into something less than the spontaneous freedom and creativity of God's creation. And in moments that are free of all pretense man knows the loss of that spontaneity; his life becomes burdensome. But in that he knows his loss, man exercises the essential nature that is his.

In *Will Therapy*, Otto Rank has developed the thesis that "creative guilt" arises from the fact of a creative God, and he cites this development as especially characteristic of western culture. In this view creative guilt can only be atoned for through new creation. But here is the precise point of difficulty for man. His anxiety restricts his creativity to fleeting moments that are conspicuous by their contrast to the rest of his harassed existence. He cannot be creative without, at the same time, being anxious. The weight of guilt and its unfailing component, hostility, press heavily upon the conscience of modern man, and his *unfulfilled creativity* becomes another factor limiting his existence. Jeremiah voiced a lament that speaks for many in every age: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jeremiah 8:20).

Thus guilt is planted as deep as anxiety. Granted that guilt takes on the character of internalized authority and that man seldom consciously selects the real object of his guilt feeling, it still must be maintained that any view that reduces guilt entirely to unreal, internal reflections is hardly in accord with the real and tragic character of human existence. The Christian doctrine of sin has avoided a fatal determinism, by insisting that man is both responsible and guilty, and that his guilt must be dealt with realistically, since it cannot be resolved simply by explaining it.

The Christian distinguishes between real guilt and "guilt feelings." For the latter belong to the area of pathology and must be dealt with as psychic injuries. "Guilt feelings" are neurotic distortions of one's actual responsibility, distortions that spring from illusion and fear. A child who is too often reminded that "Mother knows best" may later

feel unnecessarily guilty every time he acts in terms of his own rightful interest. Real guilt, on the other hand, is an inevitable component of man's relation to man. It is that deep awareness—innermost in every self—that we have been tried and found wanting. It serves to remind man not only that he is a creature who makes decisions, but that he must stand under judgment for the use he makes of that freedom. The ultimate picture of guilt is one of personal responsibility before the holiness of God. For an Isaiah, that experience evoked an expression of guilt and repentance that could hardly be dismissed as "guilt feelings":

Woe is me! For I am lost;  
for I am a man of unclean lips,  
And I dwell in the midst of a people of  
unclean lips . . . (Isaiah 6:5).

Christian theology and some contemporary views in psychology are at variance in this matter of dealing with sin and guilt. This is not surprising when one considers their different approaches to human problems. Even if it could be granted that "neurosis" and "sin" refer to the same set of facts, the theologian measures sin against the absolute claims of God, whereas the psychologist regards neurosis in the light of the culture in which the individual lives. But the psychologist who takes into account the cultural and individual aspects of guilt feelings often has tended to reduce them to neurotic manifestations. Although the Christian view of guilt has been sharpened and made more precise by these insights from clinical psychology, it still affirms the reality of guilt. In this view the experience of guilt is not necessarily a sign of neurosis. Rather it is a profound demonstration of the fact that man knows, and cannot escape, something of his own responsibility in freedom.

The relation of theology and psychology becomes even more complex when we consider their practical roles. At

first sight those roles seem to be clearly distinctive. The Christian treatment of sin and guilt is guided by the doctrine of man's alienation from God, as symbolized in the fall and original sin. Psychology, on the other hand, deals with the difficulties man suffers in his interpersonal relations and the compulsive anxiety that denies him the satisfactions of living. The goal of Christian salvation is the restoration of man to God, a restoration which heals man in every relation. The goal of therapy is the renewal and rediscovery of the self in interpersonal terms. Thus far, there would seem to be no conflict between the two views, inasmuch as they are dealing with man in different aspects of his being. Indeed, there are those who insist that this simple distinction be maintained in therapy and in pastoral work. Some Roman Catholic writers take this view, when distinguishing between the manner of handling guilt in analysis and its treatment in confession.<sup>4</sup> They define sin as *malum culpeae*, the evil men do, conceived in a voluntary sense, and neurosis as a *malum poenae*, an evil men suffer or undergo. The compulsive aspect of neurosis is stressed in contrast to the voluntary nature of sin.

Such theoretical distinctions may be helpful in making clear the different approaches to the problem of sin and neurosis, but actually both voluntary and involuntary action are involved in the human situation; and neither may be isolated and treated independently, as these definitions seem to imply. The psychologist may find it necessary to deal with religious matters, and the confessor certainly must be aware of neurotic tendencies if he is to be of real service. From the point of view of Christian faith the multiplication of guilt and hostility in man's life can be dealt with only by a view that brings healing not only in interpersonal relations, but also in the relation to the ground of existence—to God.

<sup>4</sup> See Victor White, "The Analyst and the Confessor," *The Commonweal*, XLVIII (1948), 348-49.

Within the context of this understanding, therapy may proceed to correct neurotic guilt and, also, to heal the deepest source of man's guilt.

The deepest source of man's guilt is the awareness of his distance from God—the shattering experience of knowing both dependence on God and judgment by Him. Without that relationship to God, the distortions in guilt feelings to which psychologists point are abundantly present. The secular world cannot confess its guilt because it recognizes neither the judgment of God nor His mercy in forgiveness. It knows only, what the Bible calls, "the wrath of God." Faith provides the clue that turns the experience of guilt into an occasion of returning and rest in God. In the final analysis the resolution of man's guilt is possible only within the realm of repentance, grace, and forgiveness.

#### SOME ASPECTS OF MAN AS SINNER

Sin is more than moral inconsistency, more than a failure to be true to one's highest standards. It is an infection that attacks the roots of human action. In sin man succumbs, in the depths of his being, to inordinate pride. He loses that which he is in the fullness of creation, and becomes that which he is in separation: a slave to sin. The work of original sin is so deeply planted in the human race that this alien slavery has lost its foreign aspect. Its spiritual climate has become as familiar and as seemingly harmless as the words of the child's spelling exercise:

In Adam's fall  
We sinnéd all.

Man's slavery to sin, a running theme of the Bible, envelops and hampers his right choices. This is something that sentimental moralists will never learn. Their emphasis upon the formula, "You can do it if you try hard enough," fails to discern the persistent pride in man's heart, the rank

slavery to sin that all too often motivates such efforts. T. S. Eliot's prayer is relevant:

O Lord deliver me from the man of excellent  
Intention and impure heart . . .<sup>5</sup>

A glance at the references to sin in the Bible can hardly escape giving one the impression that the crucial concern with sin is not its missing the mark ethically, important as that is, but the spread and dominance of sin over man's life. The Bible wastes little time on ethical refinements, but it is vitally concerned with the ultimate commitments of man's life, whether they be to sin or to God. This emphasis on the power of sin is made emphatic in the Lord's words to Cain after he had angrily defied the Creator:

If you do well, will you not be accepted?  
And if you do not well, sin is couching at the door;  
its desire is for you, but you must master it (Genesis  
4:7).

These words bring us back to the paradox of sin and guilt. In sin man becomes the slave of sin. He strives to hide his sin in vain platitudes while, at the same time, he may plead helplessness before its power. Yet even though man alone is incapable of good works, at the deepest level he is responsible for his behavior. Sin desires him, but he must master it. No man escapes the temptations of anxiety. Every man has reason to worry about the acceptance of his gift. The really crucial matter is whether or not he has succumbed to the temptation of anxiety in his heart. The driving force behind man's servitude to sin is anxiety. The lash of that whip remains an ever present threat. It may become associated with specific fears, such as the fear of meeting other people, or the fear of decision, or the fear of death. But it

<sup>5</sup>T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), p. 105. Used by permission of the publisher.

continues as a pervasive threat beyond every occasion of fear. For the Hebrews, en route to freedom from the tyranny of Pharaoh, the subversive power of anxiety found its mark in the pain of their cry:

. . . It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness (Exodus 14:12).

That is the cry of an old slavery that is forever finding new expression in man's life. It is the enemy of his freedom, and it eludes all efforts to track it down. Even so, in troubled dreams and in days filled with exacerbated wakefulness, man experiences the full weight and wearing pain of this psychic cramp! As one person said ironically, on being informed that he talked in a disturbed manner while asleep, "I don't dream, but I must have something to talk about." That "something" of anxiety finds ways of expressing itself. It forces much human behavior into meaningless channels, meaningless except in the sense that these channels serve to prevent the individual from facing his real motives. Anxiety is the climate for sin. It undermines the effort to achieve genuine selfhood, by emphasizing the pain of freedom. But that unrealized selfhood—that death in the midst of life—leaves man further isolated and cut off from God and man. This loneliness is the deepest pain. Thus man, as sinner, is blinded by the very power of the sin that holds him in its grasp. This is slavery, the curse of sin.

#### SIN AS SELF-WORSHIP

For biblical religion the perennial sin of man is false worship. It is hardly an accident that the first two commandments not only deal with false worship, but actually proscribe the worship of images. The secret behind every image is that it is made and manipulated by man himself. Whether in disguise or in open defiance of God, self-worship is at the heart of every false worship.

When man rejects his creaturely relation to God, he

comes more and more to depend on “self-made” gods. The “images” that modern man worships may be more sophisticated than the golden calf or the idols of the ancient world, but for that very reason they are more dangerous. The modern idolatries may take forms that seem innocent and praiseworthy enough—patriotism, social reform, and personal disciplines among a host of others, but pride, in many cases, rots at the core the fruit of these endeavors. The heart of genuine patriotism, like that which breathed in Abraham Lincoln, does not shun judgment, but rather welcomes it in the prayer that “this nation under God may have a new birth of freedom.” In contrast stand the men of Moscow, who, like the self-appointed masters of conscience in America, seem to have hit upon the success formula: he who shouts loudest, claims most, and answers to no one shall win the most adherents! But God is not mocked. Nor shall His people be long impressed with brazen idolatry. After all, there is a sequel to one of our often quoted texts where doing the will of the Father is preferred over pious words:

On that day many will say to me,

“Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?”

And then will I declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers” (Matthew 7:22-23).

No number of loud claims or of impressive “works” shall be able to hide the fact that it is through these means that men worship themselves.

The disciplines of personal religion have multiplied in this age of anxiety. In many quarters this has been taken to signify a revival of religion. There can be little doubt that, for the first time in many decades, men are asking the questions that call for the answers of faith. But it is also true that this disturbed questioning is being exploited by some who, with ready-made answers, promise the recipient the power

to control the Divine! The tragedy of much of the “self-help” literature of this age is that it covers with a thin veneer the treacherous break-throughs in man’s inner-life, which, if taken more seriously as opportunities for self-knowledge, could lead to profound renewal rather than to bitter frustration. For all its confidence, Christianity is not a grand detour around suffering, but a highway through the “valley” and the “shadow” to the presence of God. Popular religion, on the other hand, can sometimes be a refined version of man’s persistent idolatry.

Anxiety lies behind man’s worship of himself. His independence from God never seems to be clearly established. He is constantly engaged in the effort of trying to prove himself, in insisting that he is the captain of his own soul. But to use a word from psychology, he *dissociates* every bit of evidence, coming his way, that indicates that his existence is dependent upon God. His own insecurity is laid bare in that constant protestation of independence. He “protests too much,” listing his virtues like another Job, yet all the while desiring to see the “book” in which the Almighty has written the real facts. Beneath his arrogance and self-worship man is betrayed by an anxiety that constantly reveals his insecurity.

#### SIN AS SELF-HATRED

The paradox of man’s sinfulness is that this sinfulness is a self-worship that is at the same time a self-hatred. Under the threat of anxiety man rejects both his dependence upon God and the self that God has given him. Selfishness, as opposed to genuine self-love and self-respect under God, is grounded in man’s unwillingness to accept himself. In pride, a man will measure himself defiantly against God, while at the same time he sees himself through his proud imagination, not as he actually is, but as his vanity wishes him to appear. Here is the driving force behind the tyranny of the “should” and the moral “oughtness” that is so much a part

of our common life. Even the gifts of faith, such as the virtues described in the Sermon on the Mount, can be transformed into demonic forces when they are sought apart from faith. Many a Christian, as an imitator of Christ, has undermined his own witness when he has permitted himself to forget that "these things" described in the Beatitudes are added only when one seeks "first His Kingdom and His righteousness." (The whole of St. Matthew's text is relevant here.) The claims of Christ are intended for those who know His love; but the constant anxiety to appear always "in the right," and the oppressive use of righteousness as a means of controlling others can hardly be classified as expressions of answering love. Behind this misuse of the goals of Christian living lies an inner betrayal: a profound distrust of one's own acceptableness and a constant need to prove one's worth. Self-hatred, as well as self-worship, resides at the core of man's sin.

The fact that human existence is weighted with man's tragic self-hatred is daily confirmed in the experience of every counselor. The excess of anger that finds expression in personal and social life has become the concern of many students of human behavior. Karl Menninger, the psychiatrist, writes: "There is everything to make us believe that man's chief fears are not of the immensity of the universe but of the malignity of his own aggressive instincts."<sup>6</sup> Certainly, there is much evidence to lead us to agree that hostility is a widespread and overwhelming fact in our common life, hostility that can be turned against the world or against the self with equal force. It is the inevitable component of unresolved anxiety. Man's anger in his insecurity underlies his self-contempt, as well as his self-glorification. Anxiety determines his total attitude toward himself and the world. Its ready conversion into hostility is manifested in the familiar tensions and bitterness of modern life. We should

<sup>6</sup> Karl Menninger, *Love Against Hate* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1943), p. 190.

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be reminded, however, that angry aggressiveness is not a phenomenon peculiar to modern man. St. Paul was sufficiently familiar with its appearance to describe man as being "full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, [and] they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God . . . foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless" (Romans 1:29-30).

It would seem to us that any attempt to locate the root of sin exclusively in either self-hatred or inordinate self-love is to overlook the fact that both attitudes are consequences of man's separation from God. That separation from God under the threat of anxiety together with the resulting false worship is the root of sin. Both self-glorification and self-contempt do violence to man's given relation with God. Both are intensified by the anxiety that man feels; and as psychiatry has amply demonstrated, these ambivalent attitudes may exist in the same person at the same time. The resulting contradictory behavior is a picture of sin: it is a false worship that alternates between self-worship and self-hatred.

### CORPORATE SIN

Man as sinner always lives in the community of sin in proximity to other sinners. The fact of corporate sin and its tendency to perpetuate itself in communal life becomes more significant for every one of us when we remember that it is within the intimate family life that community for the child begins. Here his character is shaped, and much depends upon the emotional stability and moral health of the parental figures. It is here that a frustrated and hostility-ridden mother or surrogate can wield a devastating influence on the growth and health of a child under her care. Thus the sin of one generation is inflicted upon another, and insecurity is perpetuated. A father who will not accept his son sets the stage for that son's desperate effort to find the love and support that has been denied him in ways that may involve him in great pain and further sin.

The view that we hold here is that community and interpersonal involvement in sin does not explain anything more than the occasion of its continuance. There can be no doubt that every person is shaped in large measure by the environment in which he lives. But that environment, particularly in its spiritual and emotional aspects, is constantly being altered by the decisions made by man. In the Christian view, the crucial temptation of anxiety inevitably confronts the solitary individual. He cannot escape that decision. But in his capitulation to sin, he extends the reign of sin in corporate life. The parent, whose consuming desire is to "keep the peace" and avoid conflict and who, therefore, succumbs to the temptation to manage and to insulate his or her children, may discover too late that the withheld gift of genuine relationship has destroyed the family from within. Thus, every interpersonal relation provides the opportunity of one person's use of another to relieve his own anxiety and to perpetuate sin.

The role of sin in the mass movements of modern history can hardly be overlooked. The apparently successful collectivist societies, whose remarkable unity and power seems to be achieved at the cost of "dead-level" conformity, are motivated by a common idolatry; and the result has been disastrous not only for those that have been enslaved by the totalitarians but also for those that have been the victims of their brutal "brain-washing" techniques. The fact that strong men have been broken under the weight of that terror may prompt a reappraisal of our own uncertain faith. But the strength of totalitarianism may also prove to be its weakness. When man becomes an automaton, he is bereft of his humanity and of the will to adapt freely to new situations. In the Christian understanding of history, civilizations rise and fall according to the way in which they manage the corruptions of pride within themselves. When a Russian farm manager refuses to harvest sugar beets in the

middle of a food famine because the yield would be greater than his "estimate," the seeds of destruction seem to have produced their flower within that nation.<sup>7</sup>

In every case of anxiety described in this study, sin and community involvement have been closely associated. Although we do not hold that there is a mechanical relation between the two, we have pointed out frequently that it is in interpersonal relations that the child learns the patterns of response and relates himself to the world. As Sullivan has observed, the child's patterns of behavior, even of neurotic behavior, are the tools which he uses in getting along with the world. These tools are power mechanisms, whether they be loud cries or passive behavior.

As an illustration of community involvement in an aggressive orientation, here is the case of Norma, who comes to the counselor because she is having difficulty in getting along with her friends. They think that she is too bold, and they "gang up on her." Further investigation reveals that Norma is aggressive and tends to be hostile and suspicious in her relations with women. Significantly, her mother is an extremely hostile woman, who attacks the girl in the presence of other people, prefers her male children to Norma, and boasts that she is much prettier than her daughter. In such a situation one can imagine that Norma learned to fight for herself early in life; her compulsive hostility now remains a problem even in her normal relations with girl friends. In every relationship she unconsciously applies the formula that "worked" in her relation to her mother; but that formula is unnecessary now and is challenged by her compeers. Her compulsive continuance of this attitude threatens to isolate her and to deny her the satisfactions of genuine companionship. Her problem is complicated by the fact that it seems easier to fight than to

<sup>7</sup> See Helmut Collwitzter, *Unwilling Journey—A Diary from Russia* (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1953). The whole of this remarkable account of a German chaplain who was a slave laborer in Russia is worth study for a practical Christian understanding of Communism at work.

relate in a world in which so many people are "fighting mad."

Another relatively young woman comes to the counselor with the problem of her broken marriage. Her husband has been involved with another woman and a child is expected. She blames herself because she has failed to produce a child. But the husband has been involved with other women several times before, and even now he is more concerned about the pregnant woman than he is about his wife's needs. She accepts this, or seems to, and feels called upon to defend him. She is "ready to do what he wants," although this had previously involved taking care of another woman, pregnant by him; and it now means giving him a quick divorce.

It would seem that the counselee's own desires never reach direct expression; and even now, as she faces the loss of her husband whom she loves, she is unable to do otherwise than as someone else wants. Her attitude reaches back to childhood when she was constantly compared unfavorably to her brother by her mother, who used to assure her that she would not "get by on her looks." The counselee's complete attitude reflects a passive compliance. This compliance certainly was a factor in her unsatisfactory marriage adjustment and will continue to limit her mature human relationships until resolved. The tenacity of that compliance can be understood only when it is recognized that this is her way of controlling others.

Therapy in both of these cases would eventually include an understanding of the relevance of the behavior pattern (hostile or compliant) in the early situation, and of the ways in which it has been carried over into adult life. One would hope that the outcome of such therapy would be not only an ability to accept and enjoy relations with other people as they really are, but also some awareness of how these habitual ways of relating to others represent the means of sinful control of them. These cases illustrate how in-

timately associated sin and power mechanisms may become in the actual process of living. The behavior pattern in each case is "explained" in terms of an earlier necessary adjustment; and yet the very condition that made these adjustments necessary in the first place points to an unresolved primal anxiety that provides the soil for the growth of compulsive anxiety. In existence, anxiety, like other slave masters, cannot be appeased. It must be resolved in faith, as well as understood and corrected in its behavior manifestations. Here, then, the task of therapy and religion would be combined: the one striving to reduce the exaggeration of compulsive anxiety, and the other bringing reconciliation in the depths of the soul.

Without that reconciliation the insecure self must constantly seek assurances of its own power and importance in a compulsive struggle against doubt and anxiety. It must seek to hide and repress its ultimate helplessness under a cloak of dogmatic assertiveness or habitual desperation, attitudes which grow daily in the service of spiritual arrogance. War, injustice, and prejudice become the bearers of this accumulating sin in community life. Man's conflict with his neighbor stems from that ultimate unresolved conflict within himself and before God. Those who would make little of the ultimate healing that is needed must stand under the judgment of Jeremiah,

They have healed the wound of my people lightly,  
saying, "Peace, Peace,"  
when there is no peace (Jeremiah 6:14).

Indeed, the prophets had rightly concluded that there is an intimate and direct connection between social injustice and the inordinate concern for one's own security.

#### SIN AND ANXIETY

The fact is that without release from anxiety in the depths of his being, man is consumed, either in pride or

contempt, with self-concern. He is "so concerned about himself that he cannot release himself for the adventure of love."<sup>8</sup> Without God man's primary concern is to secure himself against the anxious dread that dwells in his heart, a dread that Kierkegaard described as "so hidden in a man that he himself does not know it." Still it drives him on and attaches itself to specific objects in his human relations. Bodily functions, such as sex or eating, become the bearers of this anxiety when their natural and wholesome functions are made to serve its compelling drive for security. Drunkenness and other ways of escape give the illusion of peace regained. One's relations with one's self or with others come to serve the desperate purpose of proving that one is not quite so insecure as he feels in the dark moments of his life. There is little wonder that man constantly seeks release from the tension of life or that he continues to flee down the "labyrinthine ways," further and further away from his genuine selfhood and God, for in primal anxiety he has turned away from the source of his unity and peace. This turning away from God is sin, and it carries in its wake frustration, constant self-laceration, and a sense of helpless guilt.

Thus, basically, sin is the unwillingness to be one's self as a child of God, or in the formulation that Kierkegaard used, sin is despair of willing to be one's self. In sin anxiety becomes the compelling force of life, and the self becomes rigid. Obsessive patterns are repeated with maddening regularity, while the self is at the mercy of outward circumstance. The actual issues of life, whether outward or inward, are merely the screens on which the deeper struggle with anxiety is projected. Man the sinner is a closed-off, isolated self who struggles to reduce life to simple rules that can be applied without committing the whole self. Perhaps this is the secret of religion's ageless struggle against legalism. For the latter, in its excessive variety, represents man's

<sup>8</sup> Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, I, 272.

effort to ground his security in legal definitions that, by their rigidity, betray an underlying insecurity. St. Paul seems to have understood the danger of such a view when he wrote that when he "delighted in the law," he saw another law in his innermost self, "making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members" (Romans 8:23). Man's sin drives him to seek security in rules and to hope for salvation in endless activity. His peace, says Christian faith, lies in "returning and rest" before God.

The Christian community is not exempt from the debilitating struggle with anxiety, and delight in the law has been one of its recurring problems. It is a fact of tragic consequence that the Christian Church itself has too often become the expression of "dead-level conformity," which has rendered it unable to deal with present moral problems, whether they be individual or social. Law, rather than liberty, has frequently characterized the New Covenant. Legal rules which define that which is permissible rather than that which is morally relevant, have been the content of some moral theology. A practical result has been an emphasis on various sins rather than on the inner disruption of the whole personality in sin. The Jesuit, J. J. Slater, speaks for a wide segment of the Church, inside and outside of Rome, on the handling of the excessively scrupulous person whose groundless fear causes him to confess things that are not sinful. The writer advises the confessor to tell the over-scrupulous person "to act boldly and fearlessly, that he may do whatever is not obviously forbidden, and that it is impossible for one who wishes to serve God to commit sin, especially grave sin, without being aware of it."<sup>9</sup> Now certainly such advice is good for those who can make use of it; but when driving anxiety stands back of the "scrupulous" ritual, the absolution of the Church without the advice (unless it is to go deeper) will possibly help more. And

<sup>9</sup> J. J. Slater, *Manual of Moral Theology* (New York: Benziger Bros., 1909), I, 79.

the concern of the confessor with symptoms and legally defined sins leaves much to be done before the absolution of the Church can meet and resolve the anxiety that lies back of both.

The tendency of some moral theologians to apply Thomistic formulations to modern moral problems results in questionable advice for moral health. Harton, in his *The Elements of the Spiritual Life*, seems to lack a dynamic understanding of the relation of human behavior to underlying anxiety. In one section he warns against the "danger and fact of concupiscent imaginings," calling it particularly to the attention of those in charge of children because "here the habit of day-dreaming most often begins." He adds:

The practice of day-dreaming is dangerous for this reason (the imagination is impatient of control). Day-dreams practically always center around self, and, it is easy for the Devil to slip in his temptations for its ruin. It should be realized that the imagination is the Devil's point of direct contact with the soul, whence he attacks the mind and the will.<sup>10</sup>

The vision of thought-control nursery teachers arises from such speculations; but we would predict that even they would fail to regulate day-dreams, especially where fantasy outshines reality.

The great mistake of such a view is that it divides the self into artificial segments, when a view of the whole personality is needed. Day-dreams, like other symptoms, are a part of the total personality, and they operate as do other symptoms: to enable the personality to function without more serious disruption. A child who day-dreams excessively has a reason for doing so, and help should come not in the direction of further repression, but in that warm and confidence-giving spirit of Christian love that will draw the

<sup>10</sup> F. P. Harton, *The Elements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1948), p. 118. Used by permission of the publisher.

child into fuller participation in the real things of his life and into honesty and truth about himself. Reality must be made more attractive than fantasy, if moral health is to develop.

Genuine spiritual health for the individual depends not on rules for the regulation of his life, but upon effective dealing with the underlying anxiety that blocks his spiritual development. The very fact that although the Church has the resources to deal with the basic anxiety of existence, its practice can be so easily transformed into rigid rules is proof again of the force of anxiety in man's life. The Church, in the petition of a familiar prayer, stands in constant need of purification from corruption, direction from error and reformation where it is amiss. It must be added that the Church is today not without leaders who are enriching by their studies the field of depth psychology and applying these insights to the fact of man's sin. Indeed, great theology has always been based on a profound psychological understanding of man; Freud and St. Augustine are co-workers in the field of human understanding.

#### SUMMARY

Behind man's sin is the real self, the self that God intended. Despite the slavery of sin, man at heart never gives up the effort to recover unity within himself, with his world, and with God. Even sin may serve a positive purpose if it drives one to seek genuine health and salvation. If, like the prodigal son, man comes to his senses (though he find himself "among the swine"), his salvation has begun. Boisen describes in one paper the case of a patient who, as a boy, was disturbed about the management of the sex drive.<sup>11</sup> His worry forced him to seek help in a religious meeting where Moody was preaching a message of God's forgiveness. The experience set the boy free of self-judg-

<sup>11</sup> Anton T. Boisen, "The Problems of Sin and Salvation in the Light of Psychopathology," *Journal of Religion*, XXII, 3, 288-301.

ment, since he responded to the "good news" of God's judgment and grace. Despite the fact that many problems remained, the boy's health was improved by the overcoming of his isolation in Christian community and of his estrangement from God in the message of forgiveness. As Boisen points out, consciousness of sin was the first step in this individual's salvation. When a man claims even his sin as his *own*, he has turned the corner toward recovered freedom and the outreach of God's love.

Thus far in our study we have attempted to describe the anxiety that motivates man's life and its relation to sin. We have held that both compulsive activity and sin are related to the primal anxiety that man experiences in existence. Compulsive activity, then, is structured by the cultural and interpersonal relations which bear upon the individual, while sin is man's desperate effort to secure himself against the anxiety he feels in isolation and apart from faith in God. In actual life both sin and compulsive activity are intimately associated.

In the remaining chapters, we shall consider what happens when through Christian faith man faces himself in sin and in that primal anxiety that stands back of his sin. In the Christian view man's life is tragic and contradictory because of sin. His wound will not be healed lightly. But then, the Cross and its implications for all men is no light matter, either. In the shadow of that infinite torture every man may see his life as an end and a beginning. As Reinhold Niebuhr has said, "If we can weep for ourselves as men, we need not weep for ourselves as man."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *Beyond Tragedy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. 169.



*Part III*

**TOWARD RESOLVING ANXIETY  
IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**



## MAN IN RECONCILIATION

"There must be something more than this!" These words point to the depth of modern man's disappointment in the life he knows. Somehow, life never seems to "come off." A character in a recent novel, after embezzlement and abandonment of his family, sends a part of his stolen money home as an act of contrition. In his return address, he uses the name, "A. Traveler." Many a man feels that he is a stranger and a sojourner in a world of aliens. For the Christian, the recognition of that alienation from himself, his neighbor, and God is the beginning of life in faith. But the hard fact of separation must be faced as the first act of faith.

Christian faith accepts the fact that man is a sinner. It also knows the tragic character of his sin. When driven by an anxiety that he has failed to resolve in faith or to accept in finitude, man's existence abounds in shattering isolation and contradictory impulses. He is neither happy nor free, an exile from his created harmony, seeking constantly a new Jerusalem to replace his lost paradise. The Christian message is also one of reconciliation. It is a message of man's recovery of health and unity within himself and his world by God's help. And reconciliation begins for man when he faces himself in genuine self-examination.

### FACING THE SELF

In a world that is already organized to prevent people from ever coming face to face with themselves, it is difficult

for the individual to know the real facts about his self. It has been said that, unlike the loss of a limb, the loss of the genuine self can pass quite unnoticed. Man's existence is too often a mad rush to escape this very self. Buried in the unconscious, anxiety covers its dwelling place by making life a "busy" affair and setting a pace that prevents one from ever coming to grips with the real propelling force of his life. Anxiety even robs sleep of its "sweet innocence," for to sleep so often means to dream of trouble in disguised symbols.

It was in dreams, however, that Freud began to see the possibilities of psychoanalysis, thus inaugurating a new era in self-understanding. Throughout the ages men have gained inner awareness by opening their hearts and secret thoughts to themselves, as to God; but today, in the techniques of depth psychology, man possesses new and exciting means for self-understanding. A rigorous honesty is required if one is to face himself, an honesty that must be matched by a faith at least equal to the anxiety that drives him on.

Let it be frankly stated that honesty is no easy matter. For the self under scrutiny, it is like pains of death that came upon the Psalmist in his trouble and heaviness:

The snares of death compassed me round about,  
And the pains of hell gat hold upon me (Psalm 116:3).

Perhaps this is a deeper meaning of the agony and struggle of Calvary: one must be ready for a struggle of this dimension in his battle to recover his God-given self from the servitude of sin. It is certain that pain is associated with the process of recovering self-awareness. The sergeant afflicted with gross tremor, whom we discussed earlier, had to pay a price in worry and agitation before learning the cause of his anxiety and mastering it. Self-searching before God involves the pain of guilt and the terror of eventual judgment that no man escapes. He who would know the

truth about himself must pass over this threshold of deep awareness.

While agonizing struggle is the inevitable cost of self-knowledge, it is in Kierkegaard's phrase "absolutely educational." It reveals the deceptions and flights from reality with which the self "busies" itself; it is a solitary battle like Jacob's struggle in the desert at night. Psychotherapy places much emphasis upon reliving experience. The Christian in prayer, self-examination, and worship gathers up his life again before God in order to remove that which separates him from God. It is necessary in both that one dwell upon the self as it actually is, as well as the self which, in pride, strives to be. All such searching leads back eventually to man's proud imagination and to God's judgment; but that judgment brings "saving health," as does a surgeon's knife, in that it provides the basis of confessing and returning to Him, who gave man being. When face to face with God, man finds reconciliation at the further end of self-searching.

When man confronts himself and God, he must be prepared to bear fully a knowledge of his own sin. Genuine reconciliation demands this. His real motives are laid bare. His self-division and isolation from God and his world are made inescapably apparent. In biblical terms his consuming self-preoccupation (anxious self-concern) is "broken," "shattered," and "crucified" when confronted by the unfailing love of God. In this connection Niebuhr writes:

The self is shattered whenever it is confronted by the power and holiness of God and becomes genuinely conscious of the real source and centre of all life. In Christian faith Christ mediates the confrontation of the self by God; for it is in Christ that the vague sense of the divine, which human life never loses, is crystallized into a revelation of a divine mercy and judgment.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, II, 109. Used by permission of the publisher.

Confession of sin is certainly a part of any religious self-analysis, and a necessary step in the direction of reconciliation. It is significant that Franz Alexander and Thomas M. French, in their book, *Psychoanalytic Therapy*, have described "confession" as a common dynamic mechanism in every therapy; and they cite research which relates the inability to confess to a mother, or a mother-substitute, and the inability to overcome feelings of estrangement with the later appearance of psychogenic asthma attacks. Confession is commonplace in most religions, and though its form and content may vary, its broad function is two-fold: purification, or catharsis, and reconciliation. In this connection, Professor Schneider has commented on the tendency of "civilized" religions to avoid confession of specific sins by confessing sinfulness in general; and this, he insists, moves away from the original health-giving function of confession, making it inevitable that secular "confessions" arise. He adds significantly: "When religious institutions administer opiates, secular institutions must attend to genuine cures."<sup>2</sup>

While some elements of modern Protestantism have abandoned confession as a specific service of the Church and have tended to substitute "general confessions" for individual confession, the whole movement of theology in recent years has been to deal more realistically with the fact of sin. Catholic Christianity has never abandoned the confessional, but neither has it made adjustments in the procedure of that sacramental act which might provide a more profound searching. Even so, the retention of this sacrament in Catholic communities may be counted as evidence of residual health. Paul Tillich has noted that in the predominantly Protestant cultures where the sacraments have tended to lose power, "psychoanalysis has seemed more desirable for educated people than religion."<sup>3</sup> This state-

<sup>2</sup> H. W. Schneider, "Review of *Le Confessione dei peccati* (Vol. III) by Raffaele Pettazzone," *Review of Religion*, I, 1, 50.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 288.

ment sharpens the focus on Professor Schneider's remark. When civilized religions come to ignore the need of every man to find not only an "understanding" of his sin but also forgiveness and restoration in quite specific terms, they can expect secular institutions to take over their work. But the tragedy is deepened in that modern man finds no forgiveness there. The psychotherapist will invite him to understand and to accept himself within the privileged sanctuary of the therapeutic relation. But his deepest separation remains unbridged, apart from confession of sin and God's forgiving action. We would emphasize that what Harry Stack Sullivan's statement about therapy applies equally well to the specific nature of confession: ". . . one has information about one's experience only to the extent that one has tended to communicate it to another—or thought about it in the manner of communicative speech."<sup>4</sup>

Christian experience has signalized in repentance and conversion the crucial moment for turning away from the rigidly striving self to a relaxed trust in God. Conversion may be a dramatic moment, but for the vast majority of Christians it is a series of *returnings* and *rests*, where "quietness and confidence" is the ultimate outcome. A common element in every conversion is that experience of giving up the pride-infested false self for the genuine self as grounded in God. Conversion is a returning movement of the creature to the Creator. It was thus to Brother Lawrence, who attributed his conversion to the sight of a bare tree in winter time and to the reflection that underneath its winter barrenness God preserved a power within, that in the spring would clothe it anew with leaves and blossoms. In conversion man grasps the underlying unity of creation that has been hidden from him in his isolation. Even the barren things of life take on new significance for him in the light of God's unfailing care.

<sup>4</sup> H. S. Sullivan, *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry* (New York: The William Alanson White Foundation, 1946), p. 91.

Fundamentally, self-searching and confession prepare the way for the response of faith—a faith already present in the willingness to search. It must be emphasized that Christian faith requires voluntary self-surrender rather than submission. The term “self-surrender” is used here in the sense of self-release, or letting go, in the conviction that God’s love undergirds all things. Submission would make faith in God another tyranny, while self-surrender opens the way for free and spontaneous meeting with God and with one’s neighbor. The experience of abandonment in conversion does, indeed, bring into sharp contrast the power of God and the helplessness of man. In his study of religious experience, William James emphasized this factor:

There are only two ways in which it is possible to get rid of anger, worry, fear, despair, or other undesirable affections. One is that an opposite affection would break over us, and the other is by getting so exhausted with the struggle that we have to stop—so we drop down, give up and don’t care any longer.<sup>5</sup>

But self-surrender in the Christian sense follows the pattern set by Christ, who poured out His life in joyful self-surrender. Christian faith looks “unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross . . .” (Hebrews 12:2, AV). In the Christian view of surrender the emphasis is upon the freely acting self, although the action is unconscious, as well as conscious. It is the total self, and not the mind alone, that turns to God in faith. Conversion signals a shift in the personality of the individual from calculated and anxiety-ridden efforts to *prove his worth* to its opposite, the relaxed knowledge of his worth before God. The old self is given up

<sup>5</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (The Modern Library), p. 208. Used by permission of Paul R. Reynolds & Son, 599 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

("crucified"), and the "new being" is released from the slavery of sin.

Self-examination, therefore, moves through the facing of the self in confession, repentance, and self-surrender toward the experience of reconciliation. It is no mere brief cry to God for help, no momentary glance in the direction of God—but a profound change. It means the breaking up of one's fallow ground and a long cultivation of self-knowledge, culminating in a return to God. The therapeutic significance of surrender in treatment and its close analogy to religious conversion has been observed by Dr. Harry Tiebout in his work with alcoholics. He has noted that, in treatment, the patient undergoes a surrender experience that marks an unconscious turn to a positive attitude in which tenseness, hostility, and isolation are replaced by a relaxed and realistic orientation in the world. Dr. Tiebout writes:

The phenomenon of release which makes people realize that in losing their lives they are finding them, becomes explicable if one sees that the surrender which precedes the sense of release stills the inner flight and hostility, thus permitting the spontaneous creative elements of the inner self outlets for expression.”<sup>6</sup>

#### ACCEPTANCE

In coming to know the self, the Christian learns that he is known from beyond himself. In yielding his old self, he discovers the love of God as the ground of his new self. The New Testament uses the word *agape* to describe the love of God, which, in contrast to *eros*, emphasizes the creative and freely bestowed love in which the sinner is renewed. The great moments of faith are those in which one comes to the realization that he is known and sustained from beyond himself.

<sup>6</sup> Harry M. Tiebout, "The Act of Surrender in the Therapeutic Process," paper read before Columbia University Religion and Health Seminar, New York, October, 1947, 8 pp. (mimeographed).

Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine uprising;  
thou understandest my thoughts long before (Psalm  
139:1).

Man comes to God as sinner. He is accepted in love. That is the gift of salvation. The pain of self-searching and the struggle to remove the barriers of sin are always met by God. Salvation begins here in the fact that God seeks man first. This is the glad Good News of Christ. One thing man must do: He must accept the gift—accept acceptance! For in this he is already restored to *at-oneness* with himself and with his world. In Christian faith, as in therapy, the experience of being *accepted* is the beginning of the cure. *Agape*, the love of God that seeks and finds the anxiety-driven sinner even before he finds himself, is the necessary condition for the relaxation of that anxiety and for the open, receptive attitude of faith. Love and acceptance are the daily bread of renewing life. St. Bernard of Clairvaux reminded the rationally minded medieval philosophers that God is known through the affections, not through the intellect, and that it is through love that we come to trust Him, rather than in learning. Relationship to God is more than a postulate in theology. It is the work of Christian faith in every age to remind a world, conscious of its anxiety and either too frightened or too proud to reach out beyond itself, that God's love is the condition of man's being; hence also, the condition of man's knowing himself. Hear the prayer of St. Augustine, as he stood between two uncertain worlds:

Our Father, who has exhorted us to pray, who also bringest about what thou hast asked of us; since we live better when we pray to thee and are better: hear me as I tremble in this darkness and reach out thy right hand to me. Hold thy light before me and recall me from my strayings, that with thee as my guide I may return to myself and to thee.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> St. Augustine, *Soliloquies*. II. v. 19 in *An Augustine Synthesis*. p. 19.

Christian faith holds that ultimately man cannot save himself, that tragic anxiety and his sin drive him further away from the awareness of the real source of his self-division, his unwillingness to resolve the unavoidable anxiety of existence in faith. It is true that the experience of acceptance in interpersonal therapy fosters a greater degree of health and that the whole process of psychoanalysis may bring the individual into greater communication with wider areas of the personality; but unless analysis is fulfilled by something of the cosmic healing known in the experience of salvation, it remains fragmentary, and is threatened by its very limited character. Man is not merely confused and plagued by ambivalent motives. He is broken and isolated to the very core of his being, and his self-division extends to a split with his world and with the ground of his existence. Here, not only healing but redemption is necessary. The primal anxieties of man's existence have cut too deep to be covered over by man alone. In the Christian view the self must be delivered from beyond itself.

It has been pointed out many times that the self in "faith" may be possessed by something less than the redemptive love of God. Modern psychology has demonstrated emphatically that some forms of religion encourage authoritarian patterns of behavior and undermine the self-strength of the individual. Indeed, this is always the temptation of a popular religion. It replaces a vital and dynamic relation to God with a set of rules and a privileged class to enforce them. It is a false religion and a vain worship, because it rests upon the abolition of man; that is, upon the abolition of his freedom and his selfhood. In the Christian view man's relation to God is based upon voluntary action as an expression of his unique selfhood. What purpose could freedom serve in the God-created man, if the final meaning of his life required the giving up of that freedom, and with it the surrender of his distinctive being? Biblical religion knows a great deal about such false worships, and it has raised a prophetic voice in every generation to witness

against those that use religion as a means to control others,  
those who

. . . bind heavy burdens  
and grievous to be borne,  
and lay them on men's shoulders;  
but they themselves will not move them  
with one of their fingers (Matt. 23:4, AV).

Indeed, one might say that a recurring theme in the Hebrew-Christian covenant-religion is the prophetic protest against the people who, as the carriers of the faith, try to possess it for themselves. The prophets were stoned and Christ was crucified, when they threatened the authority of those that used religion as a means of enforcing the sinful pretension of priests and kings. That prophetic spirit that searches the heart, as well as the behavior, is still the most revolutionary force in our civilization. In the light of that flood-beam, the motives of every advocate of the *status quo*—whether person or institution—shall be exposed. Christian faith and freedom cannot be shackled to the proud imaginings of man.

Jesus as the Christ is for the Christian the ultimate redeeming symbol. Here, in personal terms, man's struggle encounters the love of God. As the Christ, God became a person and through Him man's sin and separation were healed. Here man is restored to himself and to God. It is within the *agape* of God alone that this restoration is possible. Thus, the love of God is both the reason for our existence and the ultimate means of our self-realization. In the person of Christ this love seeks to restore man to that true selfhood which is in relation to God. *Agape* is a freely bestowed gift. It cannot be earned. It can only be accepted.

The first Christians preached the simple Gospel that Christ died for our sins and was raised up for our justification. In Him at-one-ment is accomplished. The cross is the measure of man's sin and of the unfailing love of God.

Those first Christians felt the surge of a new life in Christ, a new life in which the power of sin and anxiety had been broken. This, they insisted, was no "cunningly devised fable," but a reality in their lives. Nor did they gloss over the cost on Calvary or the desperate struggle that every convert must wage with sin. In Calvin's terms they sought their peace "only in the terrors of Christ," their Redeemer, having found in Him the strong love of God to persevere. Thus the outreach of God in Christ meets and accepts the sinner in his search for deliverance from the tyranny of the anxiety that is characteristic of his contradictory existence.

#### THREE ASPECTS OF JUSTIFICATION

The word *justification* today implies, in popular use, vindication, but the biblical use of this word refers more to right relations with man or with God. St. Paul sets forth the Christian view of justification in the first chapters of Romans, where he holds that, apart from a right relation to God, the Jew in his Law or the Greek in his ethics can experience *only* the wrath of God. Apart from that vital relation to God, man's efforts shuttle between anxiety and pride. The result is an anger-filled people whose bent is destruction. The apostle insists that God alone, in Christ, can close the gap between man's futility in trying to save himself in proud isolation and the acceptance of himself in faith. In a few succinct words St. Paul gives his explanation of justification:

. . . since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith (Romans 3:23-25).

Man's recovered right relation with God is the work of Christ. It is, in the deepest sense, the recovery of man himself. But it is a gift from God that must be received in

faith. He who busily engages in works to prove his worth has already rendered himself unable to receive that most precious gift.

The problem of self-worth and the manner in which man has tried to secure it, stand behind many of the anxiety manifestations in this culture. Perhaps the following account of a pastoral counseling experience will serve to make more explicit the meaning of justification, as that term is used in Christianity.

This pastoral counseling relation lasted over a period of two years, during which the counselee moved from a withdrawn, self-divided state toward a wider participation by choice in her own community life. Mrs. Blank was first seen in a general hospital where she was being treated after a miscarriage. Her father had suggested the call to the counselor, explaining that she had "turned her face to the wall." This was taken to mean that she had lost interest in living. There had been several miscarriages and a growing sense of futility in Mrs. Blank's life that was clearly noticeable to those that lived close to her. She was a woman in her late thirties, married, the mother of two physically healthy children. Her husband was shy and rather withdrawn. It was learned later that Mrs. Blank and her family had lived apart from her parents for a number of years, but recently had been forced to return home for reasons of economy.

The hospital call with Mrs. Blank was brief and uneventful, but it provided the basis for a continuing relationship that eventually resulted in her request for pastoral help some months later.

When Mrs. Blank finally came for assistance, she explained that she had delayed this action because she had long doubted that there could be any help for her. Mrs. Blank presented a picture of strange contradictions: she had been an active woman, who had always "taken charge of things" and managed her own life; but now she seemed

withdrawn and defeated. She thought of herself as a "Christian," concerned for others, but at the same time she felt deep resentment when any claims were made on her. At one point she remembered with much negative feeling that, as a child, she had felt threatened when her parents had added to an already large family by taking in orphaned children. Finally, she felt angry and exhausted that, despite all her busy activity, she "got nowhere." This was expressed in a dream in which she was on a merry-go-round that always stopped where it had started.

The counselor observed a gradual change in Mrs. Blank during the following months. Her withdrawal and her "helplessness" had become the final unconscious strategies by which she purchased the concern of others. Within the *givenness* of the pastoral counseling relation, she moved out into more responsible relations with herself and others. Behind her feeling of impoverishment was the deeply buried conviction that she was valuable only insofar as she could "possess" value, "perform," or "be useful" to others. During this early period, one of her dreams was about a diminutive person trying to turn over the page of a huge, gilded Bible. Gradually, Mrs. Blank came to face the contradiction to her faith involved in her constant effort to ground her value in something she could do or possess, rather than in herself as a child of God. Her concern now became the question, "*What is the meaning of my relationships?*" It was not without much vacillation between a desperate use of helplessness and a painful awareness of lost living that she began to move out again into satisfying relations with others. At this point she dreamed of passing through a narrow passage and of crossing a stream, and her concern became more and more "*How can I express myself through my life, my family, my Church?*" Faith had meaning now, not as a heavy, gilded book the pages of which she tried hard to turn, but as a response to a God-given relation that sought expression. Several months after this experience she described her feel-

ings as moving in the direction of "the capacity to give and to receive love without guilt feelings, to be free from anxiety and dependence." For her, these benefits flowed from the growing realization that preceding anything she did was a relationship to God, made right in Christ and made her own in faith.

Guilt, anxiety, and loneliness are the realities of man's life in sin and separation. It is in the faith of the Christian that God has acted and continues to act in His Holy Spirit and through His faithful people mightily to remedy this devastation of man. Grace begins even before man looks for help. God cares. But every Christian must be reminded that the reality of despair cannot be evaded. The Gospel of Christ is nonsense to one that is unwilling to face his own involvement in guilt and "dead-end" living. The Gospel is Good News only to those that are willing to share its death and resurrection. It was in this sense that Kierkegaard could write, "He who with respect to guilt is educated by dread will therefore repose only in atonement."<sup>8</sup>

#### **FORGIVENESS**

The word *justification* in the Greek Bible may also be translated as *righteousness*. It refers to an experience whereby one is brought into right relations with another person. There is profound wisdom in the biblical insistence that the heart of righteousness is relationship, not ethical achievement. Thus the ultimate command that comes as a climax in the Sermon on the Mount is to "seek first his (*i.e.*, your heavenly Father's) kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well (Matthew 6:33). Let us note that "these things," which include the whole range of Christian virtues, both the longing for perfection and the deliverance from anxiety, are not to be sought alone. They are given to him that seeks first a faithful relation to God

<sup>8</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Dread* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 145.

in Christ. The current revival of interest in ethics is likely to produce little but deeper despair over our unrighteousness, unless it results in the re-creative meeting of God and man in faith. Righteousness is the fruit of the faith community. It will be sought in vain when sought apart from that community.

Forgiveness is the reality of man's restored relation to God. We shall do well to remember that the verb *to give* is at the heart of forgiveness. Since it is man's sin that has broken the unity of God's created world, forgiveness requires action on the part of God. This is the theme of much of the Bible. Burrows enumerated a few of the ways in which the Bible describes God's dealing with man's sins: ". . . he heals them, removes them or puts them far away, puts them behind his back, conceals or covers them, lifts or takes them away, wipes them away or blots them out."<sup>\*</sup>

But forgiveness of sin is not a simple divine fiat. It is a deeply personal experience, not a legal manipulation; and it takes place in a manner that expresses the reality of sin and its character in man's life as utterly opposite to the reality of God's forgiving love. Here the historical realism of the picture of Christ in the New Testament is crucial. The event of Christ is of the stuff of history, and every forgiven sinner *lives into* that story by faith. This is no sentimental dream nor mystic's ecstatic vision. It happened in history; and the dust of Palestine, the sweat and grime of men's faces, the pain, the blood, and the exultant joy of it are attested by witnesses whose faith has touched the faith that touches ours.

The "new man" of God's forgiveness still belongs to the world of sin and its consequences, but the power of sin to rob him of ultimate hope has been removed. Forgiveness is the good news of the Gospel, a message "wholly other" to the world's accounting of credit and debt, and yet miracu-

\* Miller Burrows, *An Outline of Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), p. 178.

lously adequate to heal the disease that plagues man. It heals and restores in a way that is not unlike man's experience of forgiveness in an interpersonal relation, but it does so in a deeper and more permanently satisfying sense. Forgiveness restores genuine worth beyond alienation in recovered wholeness at every level of man's being. Thus restored, man participates in God's reconciling action within the community of those who forgive, as they have been forgiven. In forgiveness the "new man" is born of God's love.

In western Christendom the experience of Martin Luther has profoundly influenced the handling of sin and anxiety in relation to forgiveness. Driven by an overwhelming anxiety to find his own peace in zealous works, he discovered that his activity only heightened his desperation until, in reading St. Paul again, he rediscovered the Gospel of God's forgiving love. Here he found health and salvation anew, release from sin and tormenting conscience. The words of Christ rang with great clarity and moment for his despairing soul, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." And Luther comforted himself with the immediate significance of these words: ". . . look not upon them in thyself, but remember that they are translated and laid upon Christ, whose stripes have made thee whole."<sup>10</sup>

#### FAITH

Quieted thus in the depths of his soul, a man may accept himself as grounded in and cared for by God, an attitude that we recognize as the opposite of sin. Faith is this confidence, inspired by Christ, that makes it possible for a man to forget himself in spontaneous and loving relations with his fellows. Faith in Christ is the acceptance of oneself in the knowledge that God has already accepted him in the sacrifice of Christ. Indeed, that sacrifice manifests the eternal nature of God. The agony of Calvary and its triumph

<sup>10</sup> Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians* (James Duncan, 1830), p. 109.

beyond tragedy reveal that genuine selfhood is possible, though painful, in unbroken and loving communion between God and man. Faith does not mean that one is merely "adjusted," or that all of life's tensions are removed. It is an attitude of the whole personality that reflects confidence and peace, rather than anxiety and sin.

The vicious cycle of anxiety, hostility, and guilt is broken by faith and healed in love. Faith—*pistis* to the early Christians—is that decisive response to the love of God, poured out in Christ, which makes it possible for one to turn from oppressive anxiety to an attitude of trust in the relationship *made right* by God. In her anxiety to "justify" herself, Mrs. Blank was constantly engaged in the effort to "prove her worth." But as she came to accept acceptance in faith, her busy activity lost its driving incentive. Her concern became one of expressing gratitude for the "new being" that she had come to be in faith.

In the light of modern psychology's understanding of anxiety, Luther's emphasis on faith rather than works takes on new significance. As we have seen, anxiety relentlessly drives man on in his effort to find justification for himself. But peace does not come, as long as anxiety underlies his actions. It comes only as a complete shift of the whole personality from anxiety to faith issues in "quietness and confidence." Luther insisted that it is not many good works, but faith which "redeems, corrects, and preserves our conscience." That his target was the vacillating pride and anxiety behind busy activity, and not good works themselves, is clear in his *Treatise on Christian Liberty*, where he explains that faith does not free one from good works, but from false opinions concerning them. He added elsewhere:

Where there is no faith, there everyone presumptuously undertakes to better himself by means of works and to make himself well-pleasing to God. When this

happens, false security and presumption arise therefrom, as though man were well-pleasing to God because of his own works. When this does not happen, the conscience has no rest and knows not what to do, that it may become well-pleasing to God.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, for Luther, faith brings healing to the anxious soul in a way that no amount of good works could. In view of the soundness of Luther's emphasis at this point, it is rather surprising to find Fromm characterizing Luther's concept of faith as a "compulsive quest for certainty." Fromm holds that, psychologically, faith may be of two entirely different varieties: "It can be the expression of an inner relatedness to mankind and affirmation of life; or it can be a reaction formation against a fundamental feeling of doubt, rooted in the isolation of the individual . . ." <sup>12</sup> Fromm has decided that Luther's faith falls in the latter category and that it delivered people, after the Reformation, into submission to the tyrannical authority of a God primarily concerned with subduing the individual self.

It certainly must be admitted that doubt and uncertainty played a role in the theological development of Luther and the reformers. In this they truly expressed their age. Their minds laid bare the turmoil and agony of a people whose inner disturbance and self-division was indicated by the intensity of the Reformation break. But Luther's concept of faith stood against the other activist consequences of this inner turmoil. A "fundamental feeling of doubt, rooted in the isolation of the individual" is an accurate description of the motivating force behind busy works. In Luther's view, "works" included all the things an anxiety-ridden person may do to prove his worth—from "good deeds" to frequent confession (which Luther seemed to suspect of having obsessional dangers). Indeed, what

<sup>11</sup> Martin Luther, *Works* (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Co. and Castle Press, 1915), I, 308.

<sup>12</sup> Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, p. 78.

Fromm does not seem to be willing to admit is that existence always involves shock and the threat of isolation to free, but finite, man; and that Luther's faith made it possible for him to live with these uncertainties. It would seem that Fromm's judgment that Luther's faith was a "reaction formation" would have been more relevant if, instead of faith, Luther had sought salvation through busy, compulsive works. The reformer was delivered from sin and torment of conscience only to the extent that he was able to accept the gift of Christ in faith: "Grace releaseth sin, and peace maketh the conscience quiet. The two fiends that torment us are sin and conscience."<sup>13</sup>

In faith, the Christian participates in the healing power that is rooted in the realm of the divine. By faith he knows the joy of a new creation and a "new being." In this moment the power of anxiety is broken, and man's ability to love is restored. Such is the testimony of the New Testament and of religious experience throughout the ages. Faith opens the way for love. It removes the mountain which separates man from God.

#### NURTURE

Love is the fruit of faith. In loving self-relations and in interpersonal relations, it is possible for selfhood to mature in faith. Both the experience of justification in faith, and sanctification in love and communion are required to heal sin and anxiety in man's soul. Luther's zeal to remove trust in "works" has resulted in an overwhelming emphasis in Protestantism upon the act of justification by faith, to the neglect of the continuing "returning and rest" in the faith and holy fellowship that Catholic Christianity has striven to maintain. It is important to keep in mind that there is more to God's grace than forgiveness of sins. There is also that renewing strength and "daily increase" of God's Holy Spirit, which the prayer of Confirmation so well expresses.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians*, p. 12.

The full work of reconciliation is accomplished within the area of the holy fellowship where men accept forgiveness in faith and live within the relationship described by Christian symbols. The Church is the place where the Christian experience is possible. With St. Augustine we add that the Christian experience is not the exclusive possession of the visible Church. It belongs to all the citizens of that holy city of God who love Him above all things. But the Church in the world remains as a reminder that God's love calls us into community and restores us to the loving nurture of one another intended in the beginning. Man was made for communion, not for solitude. Creation is fulfilled when community becomes holy fellowship.

What does it mean to experience justification and reconciliation with God? We have held, first of all, that it means a restored relationship, made right by God's action, within which one can accept acceptance and forgiveness through the response of faith. It means not only release and separation from the prison house of sin, but also entrance upon a new life characterized more by faith than by anxiety. It is a new beginning; but it is only a beginning. It must be nurtured in love and strengthened by growth in the Christian fellowship. Unfortunately, there are many "Christians" whose feverish anxiety about the state and degree of their justification betrays an anxiety-ridden self, a self whose faith conforms more to Fromm's definition of a "reaction formation." These Christians use the phrases "justification" and "salvation," but at heart one feels that they have not heard or have been unable to accept God's message of forgiveness and reconciliation. For here there is a source of moral spontaneity that makes it unnecessary to be anxious about one's spiritual security. Many a Christian, like the Psalmist whose faith was shaken when he compared his lot to the "prosperity of the wicked," flees into self-pity whenever the real motive of his "faith" is exposed:

Then have I cleansed my heart in vain,  
and washed my hands in innocence (Psalm 73:13).

And like the Psalmist, such Christians will not rediscover the meaning of their faith until they go again to "the sanctuary of God," where, although "flesh and heart" fail, God is their "strength and portion for ever."

The question remains: Is justification the whole picture? What of that growth in holiness that the Church has called sanctification? Does one grow in grace toward sanctification, or in view of the fact that sin and anxiety are so persistent in human existence, is talk about sanctification a dangerous illusion? This has remained a serious problem for the Christian Church. In terms of anxiety, the question resolves itself into one of whether, by the help of grace and the sacraments of the Church, anxiety and sin may be progressively reduced, or whether the task of justification is present at every moment for the individual. The Catholic view has held that justification restores man to God and turns the soul from self-love to love of God, whereupon it may grow in grace. But the Catholic view has concerned itself more and more with the process of sanctification and the means to it, so that the need for justification at every moment has been subordinated or has disappeared. Behind the Catholic view is its concept of the fall as only a loss in degree of original perfection, and it holds that the crucial matter is grace, which restores and completes imperfect nature. Thus in the words of Moberly, the Anglo-Catholic writer, "There is no ultimate distinction between 'to justify' and 'to make righteous'; between a man's being pronounced righteous by the truth of God and being, in the truth of God, righteous."<sup>14</sup>

The Reformation, on the other hand, being acutely conscious of man's sin and of the infinite variety of ways in which he escapes the confrontation of himself in sin, dis-

<sup>14</sup> Robert C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality* (London: Longmans, Green, 1902), p. 885.

tinguished sharply between justification and sanctification, tending to emphasize the former. As a result, a large section of Protestantism has tended to neglect the specific nurture, locus, and renewal of the Christian life, signified in the concept of sanctification. The Reformers emphasized the danger of self-righteous pride in the Catholic view, which held that one could, by the help of priestly and sacramental grace, meet the divine confrontation of his life with an easy conscience. Fundamentally, they questioned whether the power of inordinate self-love is broken in justification. Sin remains to infect man's every effort to realize the fruits of his faith in love, a fact that prompted a modern skeptical philosopher to ask if the final truth of the Christian Gospel is "the persistence of sin in the lives of the redeemed."<sup>15</sup> While accepting the fact of the persistence of sin in those that have experienced justification, it is our view that reconciliation breaks the power of primal anxiety and sets man on the threshold of a new life in love. The redeemed may lose faith—anxiety and sin remaining a problem—but since he has known the joy of untrammeled love, if only for a moment, that memory will not let him forget the direction of his salvation. Eucharist—genuine thanksgiving—has entered his life. We hold further that the Church, as the holy fellowship, provides both the locus and the means of the strengthening and unfolding of the genuine selfhood discovered in reconciliation. While it is true that the Church is actually made up of anxious and sinful people, its loyalty to the Gospel is measured by its confession of this fact and by its continued efforts to realize in its corporate life the significance of the redeeming love of God. The good news of the Gospel is that Christ has made possible a new life, in which anxiety is broken in faith and resolved in love. That life is manifest in the Church, where faith works through love.

<sup>15</sup> John H. Randall, "A Review of *The Nature and Destiny of Man* by Reinhold Niebuhr," *Union Review*, IV, 2, 22.

#### A NEW CREATURE

It will be recalled that, in our discussion of man as sinner in the last chapter, we came to the conclusion that self-hatred, rooted in the paradox of pride and anxiety, is the basic attitude of sinful man. The ultimate sin is that man refuses to accept himself as grounded in God. In anxiety he despises himself because he cannot save himself. Now faith has been defined as the opposite condition, the state wherein man accepts himself as redeemed by God. What, therefore, is the consequent basic attitude of man in reconciliation? In the New Testament it is a reflection of the freely given love of God—*agape*. St. Paul in that famous Corinthian passage sketched the meaning of *agape*: . . . Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (I Cor. 13:17).

In *agape* all laws are transcended, all contradictions resolved in the outgoing and uncalculating love of God. It establishes a new covenant, written not in laws but in the hearts of men, and known in terms of healing salvation. Christian faith has held that man is regenerated from within, and that he encounters God in the depths of his own soul. The starting point, therefore, of the Christian attitude toward the self is in the attitude of God toward man: His acceptance and love.

It is common knowledge in psychiatric work today that a child's capacity to love depends upon the amount of genuine love that he has experienced in the family relation. The child of a permissive and loving mother is much more likely to relate himself in a positive way to others than one whose mother is basically forbidding and rejecting. The Christian Gospel has asserted this truth by emphasizing the freely given divine love and man's capacity to love in the knowledge that God has first loved him. This is the *saving grace* which the New Testament proclaimed; but it must be emphasized that it is based upon love as *agape*, in which

both the loving and the loved are caught up in a transcending experience of unity, unqualified by the use of love for control or submission. This point is stated in rebuttal of the notion, held in some psychiatric circles, that Christian love is used in a way similar to the neurotic mother's control of her child by the formula, "I have loved you, now you must obey me!" It is true, of course, that the Christian symbols may be put to such neurotic uses, but in these cases the "love" employed is something less than the love of God manifested in Christ; and it is the "love" of one whose need to dominate reflects a significant unfamiliarity with the "peace of God which passeth all understanding."

In coming to the Christian experience, man is taught to love God with his whole heart and to love his neighbor as himself. Christian opinion is divided as to whether self-love is implied in this summary. St. Augustine, for instance, held that it implies three things that man should love: God, himself, and his neighbor; and thus "he who loves God offends not in loving himself . . ." <sup>16</sup> On the other hand, Protestant thought, because of its consciousness that sin always infects the love of self (even as a part of the love of God and neighbor), has consequently avoided the term and has tended to consider self-love as the primary sin. Reinhold Niebuhr has indicated, in personal conversation, that he would reject the concept of self-love as a true Christian concept. In his review of Fromm's book, *Man for Himself*, in which Fromm sets forth his principle of genuine self-love, Niebuhr writes:

An insecure and impoverished self is not made secure by the admonition to be concerned for itself; for an excessive concern for its security is the cause of its impoverishment.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Przywara, *An Augustine Synthesis*, p. 851.

<sup>17</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, "Review of *Man for Himself* by Erich Fromm," *Christianity and Society*, XIII, 2, 26-28.

Perhaps one of the difficulties in the use of the term *self-love* is that it brings to mind this unhealthy self-concern to which Professor Niebuhr refers; for, to be sure, anxious self-centeredness is at the base of man's problem as a sinner. But, on the other hand, self-love in the sense of acceptance of one's own being as grounded in and cared for by God is not excessive self-concern. Indeed, it is a genuine basis of overcoming the primal anxiety that drives man into sin. It is, furthermore, a reflection of the love of God, which in human relations can free man from the anxiety that holds him a slave to selfishness. For the Christian, only the strong love of God, and thus of neighbor and of self, is able to shatter the chains that bind man to his self-contradictory ways. It is in this light that Professor Niebuhr adds to his comment on the impoverished self:

Nor is it made secure by the admonition to love others because of its anxiety about itself. That is why a profound religion has always insisted that the self cannot be cured by law, but only by grace; and also why the profoundest forms of the Christian faith regard this preoccupation as not fully curable and therefore as requiring another kind of grace: that of forgiveness.<sup>18</sup>

It remains, then, that self-love, in the sense of respect for the self as redeemed by God, follows naturally upon the love of God and of neighbor.

The new creature of Christian faith has encountered the love and forgiveness that bring health in and beyond the limits of his own self-realization. In discovering himself, man discovers God at the very heart of the universe. He also finds spontaneous community with others who, like himself, belong in Christ's kingdom. And the *new* thing about a Christian man is his faith and love, wherein brokenness is healed and freedom and selfhood are fulfilled in the

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

worship of Him, whose service is perfect freedom. That fulfillment is the answer to St. Paul's prayer in Ephesians:

May you be filled with all the completion God has to give (Ephesians 4:18, Knox).

#### THE SYMBOLS OF RECONCILIATION

We have held throughout this study that the specific locus of the Christian experience is in Christian community. Here, in company with "a great cloud of witnesses," man's faith is nurtured, and the wounds of anxiety healed. Man's deepest hurt is always suffered in loneliness. His cure must take place in community. Even the psychiatrist must heal through the establishment of an accepting community with his patient. But, beyond the consulting room, the patient looks in vain for such a community in contemporary culture.

The Church holds out the promise of an accepting community, although it must be frankly admitted that too often its promise is not fulfilled. The anxiety-ridden ways of this world receive simply a pious cloak in many congregations. Where there is promise, however, there is the possibility of fulfillment. The renewal of the Church in our "crowd culture" offers the prospect of restored community.

It is in the sacraments that the Church comes to grips, in specific terms, with the needs of man in anxiety and sin. Here the Church employs the intrinsic powers of nature, as well as some of the basic activities of man's life, as curative agents. The sacraments involve the participation of the whole self in worshipful acts which, by re-enacting a specific aspect of the drama of redemption, impart spiritual gifts to the participant. Goethe once said that the highest cannot be spoken, it can only be acted. Thus the sacraments are holy acts and symbols, which become the bearers of God's grace to man.

Holy Baptism evolved in the Church as the sacrament of initiation into the Christian community. Like Holy Com-

munion, it was specifically directed by Christ Himself. In the early Church, it marked the incorporation of the convert into the Church, and was usually accompanied by the laying on of hands, an act that signified both the confirmation of the faith of the initiate and the bestowal of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In Holy Baptism, cleansing from sin and restoration to unity with God, are symbolized by the water and by the acceptance into the "congregation of Christ's flock." Baptism marks the death of the *old self* with its tragic anxiety and separation, and the birth of the *new self* in touch with the holy fellowship. The full fruit of baptism, that is, acceptance of one's self as "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven" must be brought to maturity within that holy fellowship. Members of a congregation will do well to remember that they *start* more than they *finish* in a baptismal service. Its completion depends upon the kind of experience that the child will know among the members of Christ's flock. For although nothing can change the fact that God has claimed His own in the baptism, the meaning of that fact will be interpreted by experience.

Baptism was, to the early Christians, the seal of an inward change and the means of grace; but that it was not a guarantee against further sin is attested by the great concern with post-baptismal sin. The fact that faith restores man to unity with God and that the holy fellowship offers him an opportunity to find health for his divided self in loving communion does not mean that his primal anxiety is automatically resolved. Much prayer and fasting, as well as much soul searching, is required of those who would win the battle of sin and anxiety in their own hearts. Like the Kingdom of God, the *new self is beginning to come in the visible sacrament*; to further its growth, man must cooperate. In view of this persistence of sin and the need for continual returning to God, the Church has developed the Sacrament of Penance. From ancient times the

therapy of confession and absolution has been practiced within Christendom.

It is not our purpose here to outline the history of the Sacrament of Penance, except to indicate briefly the fact that in penance and pastoral care the Church has dealt with the same problems that are presented in psychotherapy today. The early Christians were acutely conscious of the fact that sin excludes the individual from active participation in the common life of the Church. Hatred between Christian brothers had to be reconciled before their gifts were acceptable at the altar. Confession of sin before the whole congregation and restitution for offenses committed were required, from earliest times, in order to be received again into the full fellowship and to obtain the assurance of God's mercy. As time went on, public confession was supplemented by secret confession, in which the priest played a greater role. But in both cases, penance was the means by which the "lost life" of the Christian was restored. Even though the penitential system of Christendom has become rigid and authoritarian in some aspects, it represents basically the creative and health-giving character of Christian faith in practice. McNeill has written concerning *The Penitentials*, which embodied the confessional practice of the medieval period:

The penitentials offer to the sinner the means of rehabilitation. He is given guidance to the way of recovering harmonious relations with the Church, society, and God. Freed in the process of penance from social censure, he recovers the lost personal values of which his offenses have deprived him. He can once more function as a normal person.<sup>19</sup>

Origen recommended the seeking out of "skilled and merciful physicians" who know the "discipline of comfort

<sup>19</sup> John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), p. 46. Used by permission of the publisher.

and sympathy." Such a description is a fair definition of the pastoral-care responsibility of the priest that developed along with the penitential system of the Church. Those that were not comforted by the open and direct acknowledgment of sin in the congregation must have required more and more attention from the priests that were skilled in this field. The medieval penitentials, though limited from our point of view, represent the growing effort of the Church to develop a "discipline of comfort and sympathy" for those in need of pastoral guidance.

The value of auricular confession is a subject of some controversy within Christendom. Where it has become perfunctory, where it is a brief and formal recitation of carefully selected sins, its genuinely health-giving qualities are questionable. Jung has reminded us that "nature is not lenient with unconscious sinners"; and the sin behind sins is apt to remain unconscious in very brief and formal confessions. On the other hand, we have already discussed the dangers involved in "general confessions." The Anglican Church has retained a place for private confession as well as for public; and the specific situations in which the former is mentioned in the Book of Common Prayer (namely, in The Exhortations and in The Communion of the Sick) are more than likely to require that the priest serve as both confessor and counselor. This relationship should serve to strengthen and sharpen both functions of the priest. It would seem that a church that keeps open the possibility of person to person confession and absolution will, on the whole, in its life and sacraments, maintain closer contact with the real needs of the people and keep its message of salvation firmly grounded in human experience. I note that Tillich attributes the spread of psychoanalysis in Protestant countries not only to the "rigorous moralism" that developed when the sacraments were taken away, but also to "the solitude of the deciding individual, who has to bear responsibility and guilt without the help of confession and

the related forgiveness which comes from the outside.”<sup>20</sup>

Since we are primarily interested in the role of Christian symbols in meeting anxiety today, we must conclude this discussion of reconciliation with a brief survey of the pastoral function of the priest. It will be recalled that, in our introductory chapter, we noted that the practical result of Cartesian dualism has been to divide man into body and spirit. Such a division has played its part in limiting the pastoral function of the priest to the strictly “spiritual” aspects of man’s life. But the ministry of reconciliation breaks over such artificial barriers, and in every age men turn to the priest for help and counsel. With the renewal of the concept of wholeness in modern views of health, it is to be expected that pastoral care will become more and more important in helping man find the deepest satisfactions of health.

The impact of recent psychology upon theological teaching and training is still in the period of exploration, but already there are indications that the function of pastoral care is enhanced by an orientation in the direction of the findings of modern psychology. The significant work done by hospital chaplains and the training programs undertaken by many seminaries, as well as the formation of joint study groups, point to a widespread interest in the field.<sup>21</sup> These joint efforts have brought out the fact that the contradiction between the concern of religion for dependence on God and the concern of psychiatry for the growth of human self-sufficiency, is not perhaps quite as irreconcilable as might be supposed. The late Professor Roberts has suggested the partial resolution of this antinomy:

<sup>20</sup> Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, p. 228, footnote.

<sup>21</sup> I refer particularly to the pioneer work done by Chaplains Anton Boisen, Otis Rice, Carroll Wise and Russell Dicks, the various clinical training programs, and the Washington meeting of Psychiatrists and Ministers, as well as to the Columbia University Seminar on Religion and Health. It is significant that the William A. White School of Psychiatry in New York City now provides a course of training for clergymen.

On the theological side it is necessary to emphasize that belief in God is being abused when it is made into a substitute for fulfilling natural and human conditions that are within men's scope. On the psychiatric side it is necessary to recognize that an increasing capacity for responsibility is quite compatible with continued dependence upon forces beyond one's control.<sup>22</sup>

In his role as priest and counselor, the pastor must bring the resources of Christian faith to bear upon the problems of his people. In order to help others, he also must know himself, both his capacities and his limitations. Such knowledge can be gained only by long and honest prayer, self-observation, and a gradual reintegration of his personality in terms of the self-knowledge gained. In his work as counselor, the pastor will be helped by clinical experience and a knowledge of personality functioning. He will learn, for example, that, in his relation to one seeking help, an additional relationship to the one that appears on the surface always develops. This additional relationship is determined by the counselee's problem in living, be it dependency or dominance, for example, with which he unconsciously approaches every interpersonal relation. It becomes the task of the priest-counselor not only to be aware of this distortion on the part of his parishioner, but also to use his authority and competence to assist another human being toward free and responsible existence under God.

#### SUMMARY

Reconciliation in Christian faith is mediated through the Christian community and pastoral care. It is the task of the pastor to preach the Gospel of Christ—the message of God's judgment and His redeeming love—through which man can face his anxiety and his pride, and find himself again in

<sup>22</sup> David Roberts, "Psychiatry and the Doctrine of Original Sin," paper presented to the Columbia University Seminar on Religion and Health, New York, November, 1946, 7 pp. (mimeo.).

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God's mercy. It is the continuing responsibility of the priest and of the holy fellowship to nurture that inward shift from anxiety to faith, from excessive self-concern to self-acceptance as a son of God. The ancient injunction to Peter by the Sea of Tiberias, "Feed my sheep!", applies as forcibly today to the pastor whose people struggle through the dark night of anxiety.

## MAN IN COMMUNION

The modern day Nicodemus comes to Christ under the cover of anonymity. He is alone. His questions bear the sting of wasted years. "Tell me," he says, "why do I burn with anger when all I want is peace? The praise of your skill is on the lips of everyone. Cure the hurt of my soul." And the answer is the same as yesterday, "Unless one is born anew . . ." "But," protests the caller, "I am no mere child, and besides, a man does not give birth to himself—alone. I don't need other people." Again the answer comes with quiet persistence, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." "But why?" the questioner exclaims. "I don't want to enter anything. I have earned my independence. I remember well the hard years of college and the struggle of medical school. There I was led to believe that the practice of medicine is a matter of diagnosis and prescription. What a lie! I found that people want 'talk' with their pills. They insist on telling me about all their pains. Why can't I treat them and have them let me alone? I'm so angry, I haven't read a medical journal in three years!" "You flee from meeting others," says Christ, "and fear is your prison. Open the door of your heart and rejoice that a man is born again."

### MAN FULFILLED IN COMMUNITY

Thus, in fear of human intimacy, man stands alone and outside, filled with anger because of his unfulfilled life. To be born anew is to enter again into the depths of human

intimacy, of knowing and of being known. But a man without faith and without the help of the faith community may linger forever on the threshold. He is unwilling to give up the possibility of real meeting, but yet too frightened to enter for himself. For a man's encounter with himself, which comes as a part of his encounter with God and neighbor, forces him into a night of wrestling wth himself.

If real life is meeting, man must face himself in the process of meeting others. But self-searching is impossible apart from a community of genuine concern. One must have ground to stand on if he is to examine his own soul with honesty. It is painfully true of modern history that such a community does not exist. It is equally true that the diminishment of man—his loss of humanity—bears some relation to the disappearance of community. The anxiety of existence, when unanswered in faith, drives man into deep alienation and separation:

. . . alive but alone, belonging—where—?  
Unattached as tumbleweed . . .<sup>1</sup>

It is somewhat ironical that modern man's anxiety about "becoming himself" or "being himself" has in fact coincided with a period in history when his real life, in love, faith and self-fulfillment, has been steadily reduced. This threat to man's existence must be met on the deepest level by faith and loving community. The secular world has rediscovered this reality in psychotherapy. But secular therapy is limited, both in the extent of the community that it can offer and in its handling of the anxiety behind real guilt and meaninglessness. The psychiatrist's office is not the Church, nor are his "interpretations" the absolution. For the Christian, the courage to "become himself" springs from within the Holy Spirit community, as he discovers and fulfills his elemental relation to God in freedom. When the prodigal son came to

<sup>1</sup> Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*, p. 43. Used by permission of the publisher.

himself, his relation to his father was recovered, a relation that on one side only had been lost in sin and separation. Self-realization as a goal for living takes on meaning only in relation to the community in which it is fulfilled. Man finds himself—who he is and what his destiny is—through meeting and response. For this, his only opportunity is in the actual community in which he lives, loves, believes, hopes and fears. For the Christian the Church becomes the place where lost humanity is recovered. The “new man” in Christ lives in the community of the Holy Spirit wherein the whole person—reason, emotion and vital senses—is being fulfilled.

#### COMMUNION

In Christian community, anxiety is broken in the depths of man's soul through faith, and it is healed in loving communion. The Christian life is lived out in the holy fellowship. It is significant that the New Testament is more concerned with the quality of the new life in Christ than it is with laying down rules for Church order. It rather proclaims a joyful Gospel that the spirit of God has been poured out upon those that, having repented and received baptism, now live in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, where the shared life of bread broken and prayers offered flows naturally from a common faith in Christ.

The early Church must be understood on the background of the “givenness” of community life in Hebrew thought. This is difficult for those that understand community as an aggregate of individuals. In Hebrew life, the individual lives by participation in the common life, and that totality of unity and harmony he calls *shalom*. The first Christians found that they had been brought into a new kind of fellowship, or communion, by the work of the Holy Spirit. Those that shared the common life in Christ were convinced that the miracles of faith working through love, which are described in the Book of Acts, were the unique products of their communion together. Charles Gore has

said that if you had asked one of the early believers what it means to be a Christian, you would have gotten one of two answers: (1) "It is to confess that Jesus is Lord"; or (2) "It is to have received the Spirit."<sup>2</sup>

To the extent to which the Christian fellowship today approximates its ancient counterpart, it is a place where anxiety is reduced. It is obvious that anxiety is overcome only in moments of triumphant faith. It remains a challenge to the Christian in every other moment of existence. St. Paul has reminded us that as long as man is "in this tent," he sighs with anxiety, even though a new power is at work within him in the redeeming love of God. Loving communion is both realized, and yet not fully achieved, in the Christian fellowship. It is a reality where man has passed from anxious self-centeredness to genuine selfhood, and it is not achieved to the extent that man never completely overcomes the barriers that separate and isolate him. It is in communion, however, that the Christian fellowship provides man with the opportunity to discover the implications of new life in Christ.

Psychotherapists have pointed out that those that suffer from disturbances in living must undergo a "corrective emotional experience" in order to be helped. In therapy such an experience is characterized by an acceptance and genuine concern that encourages a growing honesty in interpersonal relations. In reality, the Christian community has meant just such acceptance and warm personal concern for many people. It must be admitted, however, that too frequently a rigid spirit has prevented the Christian community from becoming a genuine Christian fellowship. In such instances, the people who call themselves "churchmen" fail to give evidence that they have experienced the meaning of salvation in their own lives. They suffer from the common anxiety that "dogs" modern man. As Christians, their failure to

<sup>2</sup> Charles Gore, *The Holy Spirit and the Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), p. 2.

settle anxiety more effectively is the more tragic because they stand so near its deepest resolution. On the other hand, where the enthusiasm of the early Church is still alive or has been reborn within Christendom, where the Gospel is truly preached and the sacraments truly received, the Christian communion is a reality that stands as a strong bulwark against subversive anxiety. This is a recorded fact in the clinical experience of an ever growing number of psychiatrists and counselors who have concerned themselves with the relation of Christianity to health.

But a warning is in order here: the primary task of Christianity is not the relief of anxiety. When that becomes its goal, it is as useless as salt that has lost its savor. The business of the Church is to show forth Jesus Christ, not only with lips, but also in living. The exchange of faith for anxiety comes about as a result of man's responding to God in Jesus Christ. In that response and in the community created by it, the dark loneliness of separation is overcome. There, having passed from death unto life, we belong to one another not because of anything we do, but because we belong to God. The resolution of anxiety is a fruit of Christian faith. It comes as a gift, while we are preoccupied with entering into the joy of our heavenly Father.

#### THE CHURCH AS *Koinonia*

In the New Testament two words are used to describe the Christian community. *Ekklesia* (church) refers to those that are called out of the world to become God's people. *Koinonia* in the New Testament is a unique word that always refers to the common life in the Holy Spirit community. *Koinonia* can be only roughly translated as "fellowship," because the latter has come to mean a kind of merely human intimacy that does not take into account the fact that God, the Holy Spirit, dwells in the *Koinonia*. The New Testament scholar, L. S. Thornton, reminds us that the *Koinonia*, as described in Acts, involved "the sharing of a

common life whose source was God" and whose eschatological outlook was reflected in the fact that all things were held in common.<sup>3</sup> For these Christians, it was inconceivable that either the gifts of this world or the Holy Spirit could be possessed individually. Theirs was a new covenant with God, who had called them out of the world to share in the new community of the Holy Spirit. As participants in that new covenant, their life in the Church grew out of their life in the *Koinonia* and was dependent upon it. Thus St. Paul reminds his Corinthian brethren:

It was God . . . who Himself called you into fellowship with His Son and in His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord . . . (I Cor. 1:9, Robertson and Plummer).

The *Koinonia* is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is not man's creation. One must enter it with the same attitude with which one comes to God: with repentance and confession in the heart and on the lips. But the mystery of this fellowship is such that when one is drawn into it as a sinner, one finds himself accepted as a Christian brother and as a child of God. Love is the reality of the Christian *Koinonia*, but its source is God and not the good will of men. The Church is the creation, not of man's will to have a church, but of the primary relation between God and man. It is in this sense that we must understand the love, *agape*, of Christian communion. Freely and spontaneously given, it relates those that share it in an abiding community wherein the fullest development of individual gifts is fostered, while the meaning of existence is interpreted in terms of that *agape*. This is the unique character of the *Koinonia*: it embodies the kind of love wherein freedom and selfhood are affirmed and most fully realized in corporate community. The early Christians found no difficulty in both *belonging* to God through the holy fellowship and yet most truly possessing

<sup>3</sup> L. S. Thornton, *The Common Life in the Body of Christ* (London: Dacre Press, 1941), pp. 1 ff.

themselves as members of that faith-trust community. Like Aristotle's man, they could be happy and bear all the chances of life becomingly, because they could not be separated from the love of God, which had searched them out and had quieted their deepest fears.

One of the sources of great sadness in our world is the fact that modern man has no home, nor is "at home" in the world he knows. There is poignant truth in Thomas Wolfe's theme that *You Can't Go Home Again*, because *home* involves more than the physical surroundings of one's youth. The Hebrews were forever reminding themselves that they were "strangers" and "sojourners" in the land, as their fathers had been before them. Man, the pilgrim, looks for a city whose builder and founder is God. But the Christian pilgrimage has not been without its way station of faith along the road where the Church, as *Koinonia*, sustains the traveler in the ongoing community of faith. To be sure, the Christian *Koinonia* is not a static community of fixed relations, even in love. It is a living fellowship where men grow in grace. The *agape* experienced in coming to Christian faith cannot be mechanically incorporated into the believer's relations with himself and with others. He must accept and share the gift within this fellowship. St. Paul reminds us that the greatest of all the *charismata* (gifts of the Holy Spirit) is "God's love which has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit [which] has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). While that love is given and shared, it can never be claimed as a simple human achievement. It belongs to those that neither try to possess it alone nor to make it their shield of righteousness. It is present in those who are "as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

It is true, however, that the same *agape* that brings the believer to a new life in faith has established a historical community where all men, even in anxiety, may look and live beyond the tragedy of their historical moment. Within

that community, a power is available to live through every affliction—"imprisonments, tumults, labors"—with quiet confidence. He that lives in Christ is never free of the temptation to sin and of the danger of separation, but he that has known the love of God can never quite forget the healing fellowship that restores the sinner. Every sin, every occasion for repentance and return, becomes an opportunity for deeper self-understanding and more profound thanksgiving to God.

The modern emphasis upon self-fulfillment as a goal for living stands in danger of becoming only a pious hope, unless there is equal emphasis upon the kind of community that fosters mutual self-fulfillment. The rigors of economic and social deprivation, and the wounds aggravated by an environment that does not care, seriously limit any change for the better in the individual. Those that work in the fields of social science and human understanding are beginning to recognize this fact by their "team work" approach as helpers. Thus social workers, psychologists, doctors, and ministers, among others, are finding not only that the patient benefits from this varied approach, but also that, with the specialists working as a team, it is more likely that the whole man will be kept in mind. But much psychiatry is still involved in a common illusion of this culture: that "changed" individuals can sustain their improvement, while living in the midst of destructive society. The attitude, suggested by the title of Niebuhr's book *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, is still widespread. Even within Christianity, this sectarian influence has obscured the real work of the Church. Where the Church has become simply the department of religion in our common life rather than the heart and conscience of society, its moral pronouncements are likely to have little influence in changing the social climate. The Church is more than a repository of moral values. It is a common life in the Body of Christ. Fortunately, the brand of preaching that exhorts a kind of individualistic discipleship is beginning to give

way to a life-in-the-holy-fellowship concern. The Christian emphasis upon selfhood is derived, not from the perspective of man in isolation, but of man in communion—where his total being meets and responds to others in that fellowship.

Personal values are so much a part of the Hebrew-Christian tradition that they easily can be overlooked. The recovery of man's wholeness, or salvation, is the proper work of the Church. But it stems from God's action rather than from man's concern with "personal values." Gilson, the French Roman Catholic philosopher, has said, "We are persons because we are the work of a person." To be sure, personal terms have limitations when we use them in reference to the Creator and sustainer of the universe. The word *God* refers to more than can be contained in our concept of personhood, but faith has always assumed that man's response in personal terms refers to that in God that is personal. Hence, the ultimate Christian symbol, the Trinity, is cast in personal terms, and it represents an effort to picture the deepest meaning of community where every personal life is supported and transcended. Here man discovers that self-fulfillment and community are one in the divine ground of existence. In the world God works through community. It is evident that real community is impossible apart from genuine selfhood. Hence, any society that begins by destroying personal values will end by destroying itself. This is true not only of totalitarian countries, but also of any "enlightened nation" or group that makes a fetish of conformity.

Indeed, one might say that for the Christian every social organization should be judged by the degree of freedom and personhood that it affords. An emphasis on the community or the group as an end in itself could serve to crush the integrity and spontaneity of the individual. Here the nature of the Church as *Koinonia* is crucial. The common life created by the Holy Spirit restores and strengthens every individual in terms of his essentially personal expressions—

his freedom and his selfhood. This is personally attested today by countless men and women who have suffered under oppression. Their witness, like that of the blind man who was healed by Christ, bears the authority of evident authenticity: "One thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25).

In his remarkable account of slave labor in Russia, Pastor Gollwitzer tells how the Communists attempted to destroy every expression of individuality in their prisoners. They searched their victims constantly "because any private life is robbery against the community." This is the logical outcome of a social system in which "human material" is always exploited for the "good" of society. During captivity, Pastor Gollwitzer and his companions were sustained by a faith in which their individuality was constantly renewed. The uniqueness of each person was deepened through the response of others and in the unbroken, though distant, love of their brethren at home. Wherever there is an "I," there is also a "Thou" that gives life to that "I" by response. On the deepest level, every "I" is a gift in response to the Eternal "Thou." It is only in a community of grace and mutual self-giving that humanity is fully realized.

It is interesting to note that many psychiatrists today regard such basic personality disorders as homosexuality and narcissism, as character manifestations rather than as unalterable biologically fixed attitudes, and that these disturbances tend to disappear when confidence is regained in genuine interpersonal exchange and the character disorder is resolved. Hence, the kind of relationships that the community affords the individual determines to some extent the degree of selfhood possible to that individual as a person; and the degree to which the individual is aware of himself as an independent and distinct person determines his ability to enter into real community.

The vicious circle between individual and community

failure has been broken by the action of God in setting the Church in the midst of the world. The Gospel gathers those that hear and those that see in a kingdom of responding love where, in hearing and in seeing, the miracle of creation is continued. Here both the individual and the community are caught up and transformed within the divine Trinity within the creating, redeeming, and sustaining love of God. Man's deepest realization of himself, then, is possible here where the healing power of communion flows from that love which he encounters in nature and in the depths of his own soul, and supremely in God as the reconciling Christ.

The corporate significance of personality as well as individual selfhood has found expression in the Christian *Koinonia*. The early Christians began to call the Church the "Body of Christ." For them it was a living organism where, *in Christ*, they continued the new creation that God has set in the midst of the world. For them it lived and had substance and historical reality in the community of those who had experienced resolution of their anxiety in Christian faith. They shared the new life, beyond alienation, in the Church, in its prayer, worship, sacraments, and renewing faith. There, in communion, their solidarity was a living reality. Khomiakoff, the Russian theologian, has expressed this character of the Christian *Koinonia* in the following passage:

No one is saved alone; he who is saved, is saved in the Church, as a member of her, and in unity with all her other members. If anyone believes, he is in the communion of faith; if he loves he is in the communion of love; if he prays he is in the communion of prayer.

The Christian communion embraces man and society in a corporate fellowship, which is constantly being renewed by the uniting and redeeming love of God. Its *Koinonia* is

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Lawrence Phillips in *Anglo-Catholic Congress Report* (London: Dacre Press), III, 14.

the basis both for the development of personality and for the social solidarity of all men. This uniting fellowship swept across the ancient world and, for a number of centuries, gave unity to an otherwise crumbling civilization. Indeed, it became the basis of a new civilization which, although weakened and seriously qualified by man's experience in modern history, still holds the key to the unity and solidarity so tragically needed by divided and isolated man today. St. Paul's Trinitarian "Grace" bears the note of significant need that might well be the prayer of every man in this age of anxiety: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all" (II Cor. 13:14, AV).

#### THE DYNAMICS OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

St. Paul reminds us that "the Kingdom of God is not in words but in power." Words—"brotherhood," "peace," etc.—can not heal the deepest hurt of modern man. Alone and helpless, he looks again for the saving power of community. His desperate need to belong somewhere is evident in the astonishing success of collectivism. Communism and Fascism reveal the danger of man's abysmal loneliness. They are philosophies of desperation, which promise to fill the huge vacuum created by the impotence of words and the lack of community. That pain of loneliness and uncertainty has left modern man ready to purchase certainty, even the certainty of herd conformity, at any price. Despite the accomplishments of our technical civilization, with its emphasis upon mass production and individualism, we are discovering that we are strangers and alone in our cities of identical houses and labor-saving gadgets. Neither suburban "heavens" nor the benefits of economic prosperity can hide our emptiness. In such a world, it is not surprising that the promises of comradeship that the Communists hawk have been bought by some.

It is also significant that our deprivations of real community have driven many, within the Church and without, to explore again the meaning of group life. Under the stress of war and imprisonment and the threat even of extinction, Christian communities based on a common life have again come into being. In war devastated Europe, as well as in the impoverished areas of a Harlem or a Jersey City, the Church has begun to find itself again.<sup>5</sup> In the violent years of modern history, the forced associations in prison camps and the common enterprises in the face of danger have in some instances been transformed into real communities by corporate prayer and Bible reading. This renewal is evident in the spiritual journey of a Karl Stern. The story of his life, which came to maturity in Hitlerite Germany, bears testimony of the power of the spirit to renew life and create community out of the nothingness left over from man's violence. His book, *The Pillar of Fire*, is a heartening witness to the reality of the community of grace in a world that seems convinced that it is God-forsaken.

While these signs of recovered community are hopeful, they are not likely to produce great change unless this problem of lost community becomes a major concern for many people. It is encouraging that educators and members of other professions concerned with human relations have made a good beginning in this field with the development of the National Training Laboratory in Group Dynamics at Bethel, Maine. During the past decade scores of representatives from most fields of American life have gathered there to study the processes of group life. The "laboratory," in this case, consists of those that are participating, and the method of study provides the opportunity to observe not only what a group accomplishes by way of goals, etc., but also how the members of the group relate to each other as they go

<sup>5</sup> I refer to the "new life" movements in Germany, France, and Britain; and to the "open rectory" work of Episcopal priests in Jersey City; and to the work in East Harlem Protestant Parish.

about their work. Here is a perspective much needed in Church groups. How often a "Christian" committee plunges through its tasks in rigid "unchristian" ways? How often are our leaders bewildered when results are disappointing and interest wanes?

To live through an experience in which one is forced to observe both himself and others as they relate to one another, and to face the necessity of correcting one's own impressions and judgment against those of one's teammates, is to participate in a deeper way in common life, because one moves in the direction of a more sensitive and accurate awareness of himself and others. This deeper participation is urgently needed in our parish life. Christian community cannot be merely proclaimed. It must also be demonstrated as the power of God unto salvation.

It is significant that the secular disciplines have become concerned with *Group Dynamics*. The word *dynamics* suggests the atmosphere of the laboratory where the physicist is observing the action of force on bodies. Insofar as the interpreters of Group Dynamics wish to keep their status as natural scientists, they have insisted that their work retain this kinship with physics. This approach becomes difficult to maintain, however, when one recalls that a group consists of human beings, and not of determinate objects. However predictable man's behavior in a group may be, his freedom is a factor that cannot be left out of consideration. With this precaution in mind, however, the laboratory study of groups in action yields rich insights. For instance, Kurt Lewin's studies revealed that the acceptance of a new set of values and beliefs can *never* be brought about in single units, but only by accepting belongingness to the group as a whole.<sup>6</sup> This speaks directly to those who insist that Christianity is only a moral exercise for the valiant!

<sup>6</sup> Kurt Lewin, *Resolving Social Conflicts* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), p. 59.

The word *dynamics* is very much in the vocabulary of the New Testament. There the expression, “the *dunamis* (power) of God,” is used frequently to describe the power of God invisibly present in the Church assembled. The evidences of godly power are abundant in that early Church. Renewal of life, experienced in a fellowship beyond guilt and despair, transformed a scattered and frightened people into a sustaining community whose fruits issued in faith, hope, and love. Indeed, one may regard the Epistles of St. Paul as an effort to interpret the dynamics of that amazing power that the Church had already experienced. The practical result of faith in Christ was the establishment of a new community, in which the members were constantly being restored to one another and to God. Their “group dynamics” was the power of God in their fellowship; their “communication” resulted from their Holy Communion; and although there was a place within this early Church for diversities of gifts (or roles played), it was the same Holy Spirit who sustained them all. In other words, the Christian community is the work of the Holy Spirit.

While the advocates of group dynamics have gathered impressive data on the functioning and the malfunctioning of groups, they seem to be less concerned with the spiritual forces that mold a group together. What is it that makes members of a group of one mind, and of one heart, and of one spirit? There is a tendency in the field of human relations to insist that individual needs alone constitute group cohesiveness and that, therefore, the notion of being caught up in a spirit greater than that of the individual is an illusion. This is somewhat qualified by those who regard their group life as being based on the assumption that “democracy is a way of life.” It seems obvious, however, that the democratic way of life involves more than the application of techniques. It involves an act of faith about the ultimate meaning of life and a commitment to certain kinds of human

behavior that are "democratic," as opposed to others that are "undemocratic." Indeed, one of the deeply felt concerns of those in group work is the possibility that their insights and techniques may be used to manipulate and coerce people. It would seem that this problem will continue to plague any sincere person who regards man as a determinate object whose freedom is an illusion. Wherever freedom is destroyed, either by pathology or by ideology, man's status as a person is diminished, and he is reduced to the level of a thing that invites manipulation.

The dynamic of Christian community is based on the common assumption that all life is religious, having its roots in the creative work of God. The *Koinonia* is a faith community whose character is drawn, not from its degree of human intimacy, but from its communion with God. It exists in Christ under the definite and objective conditions laid down at Pentecost; namely, continuing in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. In contrast to secular community, the Church lives for the proclamation of its faith, and its life and worship strive to be a living witness to the Lord of its faith until His coming again. Where there is no reluctance to declare a faith, the problem of cohesion, meaning, and purpose provide no embarrassment. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church and the action involved in sacramentally recalling God's mighty acts in the history of salvation, issue in a common life in which the keynote is expectancy.

Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come (II Cor. 5:17).

This is the promise of St. Paul, born not of pious hope, but of confident experience in the community of the Holy Spirit. That community is the deepest need of modern man.

Every community has its own symbols of communica-

tion, as well as its own liturgy, which is the public manifestation of its faith in action. Genuine community is possible only when its symbols provide an effective means of communication between its members. It is clear that, in the process of being drawn together, human beings learn the symbols and liturgical acts that express their common life and faith. The new member of a regiment is "traditioned" with tales of his outfit told over and over. A part of every group initiation is that *living into* the spirit and life of the group. The Jewish family recalls with moving action and liturgy the great event in Hebrew history, "When Israel went out of Egypt!"

The significance of this act of deliverance, as well as the meaning of freedom for the Hebrew, is assured a place in daily life by the specific actions that are directed in Deuteronomy. There not only are the commandments to be laid upon their hearts as signs upon their hands and as frontlets between their eyes, but also the meaning of those actions is recited in order that succeeding generations may join the chorus:

"We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand . . ." (Deuteronomy 6:21).

The Church also communicates its faith by holy actions—the continual living rehearsal of the mighty acts of God in history. By acting out the holy events in her life, the Church makes living memorial of her existence. This is no mere use of symbol to designate objects. There is a living, intrinsic relation between the symbol, let us say, of the Holy Communion, and the fact of being in holy communion. Thus liturgy is the living expression of Christian community. It is the work of the people, the concretizing of their faith. Perhaps this understanding of liturgy will find fuller illustration as we discuss worship.

WORSHIP AND COMMUNITY

What life have you if you have not life together?  
There is no life that is not lived in community,  
And no community not lived in the praise of God.<sup>7</sup>

The poet suggests that worship is the heart of community and that real life is impossible apart from that worshipping community. The Church is a fellowship of thanksgiving, where the walls of loneliness are shattered by spontaneous self-giving in praise of God. Its note of joy is the measure of its freedom *from* moral "oughts" to freedom *for* a life of praise and thanksgiving:

O come, let us sing unto the Lord;  
let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation  
(Psalm 95:1).

In worship, man responds in the depths of his being. Religious symbols become the bearers of that experience of mystery and awe that transcends ordinary experience. Otto Rank has said that man is born and dies "beyond psychology," but he can live beyond it only through vital religious experience. The Bible expresses the same truth in simpler words:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out . . . not knowing where he was to go (Hebrews 11:8).

Life does not afford us the psychological certainty which we would like to have. If we walk at all, we walk by faith. Worship is the wellspring of that faith-walking. In genuine outgoing worship, man is in touch with the deepest source of his being; his inner splits are healed; and his isolation is overcome. An offering less than a heartfelt "I" response to the divine "Thou" will not suffice here. Every pretense and

<sup>7</sup>T. S. Eliot, "Choruses from the Rock," *The Complete Poems and Plays* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1952), pp. 97 ff. Used by permission of the publisher.

evasion, every mask, is stripped away when one meets God "face to face." The astonishing truth that comes from such an encounter is that we live beyond it. That is the gift of life that the worshipper knows in his innermost being. That is the secret that Jacob discovered after a dark night of wrestling.

I have seen God face to face  
And yet my life is preserved (Genesis 32:30).

It would seem that many of the same forces are at work in genuine worship and in therapy. Both involve emancipation of the self from consuming egocentricity and a growing sense of communication within the self and with the world. Both manifest the power of interpersonal relations to draw the individual out of isolation and into community. Worship re-establishes communion with the deepest source of community—the ultimate "I-Thou" relation, a relation that transcends every human relation. Worship involves community, and corporate worship enhances the sense of belongingness and of individual worth that, as Chaplain Otis Rice has said, "comes from participation in a ritual, an observance, a group experience, which transcends individual loneliness and isolation."<sup>8</sup> Some years ago, H. Flanders Dunbar, whose work in psychosomatic medicine has opened many new vistas, suggested that pastors and priests could best further the cause of man's health by devoting their energy to the development of new religious techniques of prayer, meditation, and liturgy that would heal by making man conscious of wholeness; that is, by providing him with the opportunity to experience unity within himself and with God. Such a suggestion is worthy of serious consideration. It must be borne in mind, however, that worship is response to God, in whose strength man's anxious self seeking is shattered and in whose mercy alone man's life is restored. The motive for

<sup>8</sup> Otis Rice, an essay in *Psychiatry and the War*, ed. Frank J. Sladen (Springfield, Ill.: C. C. Thomas, 1943), p. 210.

worship, therefore, is thanksgiving. That motive comes with a radical shift from prideful self-concern to a faith-trust relation with God. It cannot be produced by techniques of prayer.

Cyril Richardson has written that ". . . in sacrifice is comprehended the whole mystery of worship."<sup>9</sup> In common usage the word *sacrifice* connotes an action by which one voluntarily gives up some possession in order to gain that which he conceives to be a greater good. We can readily see how sacrifice is involved in growth toward emotional maturity. In order to become a man, *i.e.* mature, one must "put away childish things." Infantile dependency must give way to a self-strength that comes from standing on one's own feet. Capricious and fragile moods must be given up for a greater tolerance of frustration; indeed, the ways of childhood must ultimately be sacrificed in order to be mature. But sacrifice in the religious sense involves more than calculated steps toward a greater goal. He who would be renewed before God is moved to offer himself along with his gift, that losing his life, he may find it! This sacrifice grows out of the death of repentance. It is an offering made not from the heights of self-importance, but from the brokenness that man knows in God's judgment. Those that have experienced renewal, either through therapy or religion, are apt to recognize something in the latter, as belonging to their own spiritual history.

More strictly, sacrifice refers to the making of sacred offerings whereby that which is offered becomes both the means of expressing thanksgiving to God and the vehicle of His assurance of acceptance and grace to the suppliant. The bread and wine of Holy Communion in the Christian Church are striking illustrations of sacrifice in this sense. From ancient times sacrifice has been a normal part of the Hebrew-Christian worship of God. It must be kept in mind

<sup>9</sup> C. C. Richardson, "The Formal Rites and Ceremonies of the Church," in *The Church and Mental Health*, ed. Paul Maves (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 98.

that the symbols (bread and wine, etc.) become the bearers of man's self-offering in order that he may recover that unity with God that has been lost in sin. The offerings of the Hebrews and the Christians, when handed over (made sacred) to God, symbolize thereby the way in which the self is handed over wholly and spiritually in worship. That which is sacrificed is renewed in holiness by the action of God's spirit that now dwells in it. Thus is fulfilled the promise of God: newness of being in Christ!

Psychiatry has taught us that unresolved guilt and anxiety exact their own tribute or "sacrifice" by way of unproductive activity in the life of the individual. Excessive handwashing is commonly considered to be symptomatic of unresolved guilt, whether imagined or real. It is an unconsciously motivated activity, dictated by an uneasy conscience. It reminds us that sacrifice may be motivated by destructive attitudes, as well as by responsive faith. Christian sacrifice, on the other hand, springs from the experience of release from anxiety and guilt, together with their accompanying alienation from God. Here before the altar the Christian, after honest self-searching in the presence of Him "from whom no secrets are hid," offers himself as "a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice." The Church, following the New Testament, added an emphatic note of social relevance when she insisted that a man first must seek reconciliation with his brother and then bring his gift before the altar. The Christian sacrifice, the Eucharist, is an offering of the whole community. It is alien to individualism. It is a revolutionary force that promises to destroy every *status quo* built upon iniquity. Its force will not be spent until the worshiping community becomes the Kingdom of God, and *Judgment* runs "down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

Intrinsic in and fundamental to Christian worship is its distinctive action to carry through the resolve begun in sacrifice. Worship includes not only what we declare with

our lips, but also what we show forth in our lives through service and humble working before God. All this, and nothing less, comprises the liturgy of the people. The writers of the New Testament were in daily contact with the "new sacrifices," wrought by a community at one in Christ. Forgiveness and renewal, pardon and peace—these were visible sacraments of that new power at work among them. These are the "first-fruits" of that promised Kingdom of God which is beginning to come in the Church.

It is in this light that we must understand the healing work of worship and sacrament. Within the Church the great sacraments came to be distinctive symbols, wherein the gift of salvation in Christ was acted out. Here promises became reality. In baptism and in penance, the Church reclaimed for God those lost in sin. In the ministry to the sick (the Laying on of Hands and Holy Unction), as in the Holy Eucharist, the Church acted out the conditions of recovered wholeness and restored communion beyond separations. Thus in the ministry to the sick, the Church through prayer and the use of oil blessed by the bishops (or more simply by laying on of hands) provided a tangible contact with the holy community and with God. The intention in the Church's ministry to the sick was the removal of that which separated a man from God and the opening of the way to his receiving the restorative grace freely given. In this sense, recovered health is a by-product of that new relation to God, and St. Paul's sentiments become a prayer:

None of us lives to himself,  
and none of us dies to himself.  
If we live, we live to the Lord,  
and if we die, we die to the Lord;  
so then, whether we live or whether we die,  
we are the Lord's (Romans 14:7-8).

It is not our task here to enter into a discussion of how the sacraments operate, but it seems safe to assume that

where they have been held in high esteem in the Church, they have been regarded as *special instruments* of God's grace, which is received by *faith* in the believer. Within the Christian ethos these sacramental acts have become the bearers of God's healing and restorative grace. Even in a world of the tragic division of natural and spiritual powers, the sacraments remained as unifying symbols that employed bread and wine, water and light, and all the powers of nature to bestow spiritual meaning and healing power. It is interesting to note that Jung, in his discussion of the relation of Christian symbols to the unconscious, points out that even though Luther rejected some of the sacramental interpretations of the medieval Church, he held fast to the immediately effective and sensuous presence in taking the bread and wine in Holy Communion. Thus, when his colleagues were moving in the direction of a lesser emphasis upon the sacrament as a simple memorial, Luther insisted upon its character as a vital and present union with Christ. Jung writes:

He perceived in it not merely a token, but the actual sensuous reality with its contingent and immediate experience; these were for him an indispensable religious necessity. He therefore claimed the actual presence of the body and blood of Christ in the communion.<sup>10</sup>

Carroll Wise has said that the reality of religious symbols grows out of "an intrinsic association between the experience and the form of expression, an association grasped by insight or faith."<sup>11</sup> This dynamic relation between symbol and reality is evident in the Christian sacraments. We have already discussed baptism and penance as sacraments that

<sup>10</sup> Carl Jung, *Psychological Types* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1926), p. 84.

<sup>11</sup> Carroll Wise, *Religion in Illness and Health* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1942), p. 185.

mediate, beyond tragic anxiety and sin, the recovered relation to God. The Church's ministry to the sick and the Holy Eucharist continue and strengthen that resolution of anxiety by maintaining the fact of holy communion.

The Church, through her symbols and her fellowship, is equipped to embrace the life of man from birth to death. From the picture of the Church in the New Testament, as St. Paul and the Evangelists describe its life and prayer, as well as St. James' description of the elders at prayer beside the sick, we see the beginning of a holy community that set out with magnificent spirit to minister to the real needs of every man. Again and again through the centuries, the Church has been recalled to that early vision and significant ministry. The following words of Luther portray the fresh hope, inspired by such a holy fellowship and sacraments in one who knew the full agony of anxiety:

If anyone be in despair, if he be distressed by his sinful conscience or terrified by death, or have any other burden on his heart and desire to be rid of them all, let him go joyfully to the sacrament of the altar and lay down his grief in the midst of the congregation and seek help from the entire company of the spiritual body . . . Therefore, the immeasurable grace and mercy of God are given us in this sacrament that we may there lay down all misery and tribulation and put it on the congregation and especially on Christ, and may joyfully strengthen and comfort ourselves and say: "Though I am a sinner and have fallen, though this or that misfortune has befallen me, I will go to the sacrament to receive a sign from God that I have on my side Christ's righteousness, life and sufferings, with all holy angels and all the blessed in heaven and all pious men on earth. If I die, I am not alone in death; if I suffer, they suffer with me. I have shared all my misfortune with

Christ and the saints, since I have a sure sign of their love toward me.”<sup>12</sup>

#### HEALTH AND HOLY COMMUNION

Man's lack of health is essentially a disruption of unity within himself, with his world, and with the ground of his being, God. Every psychiatric classification is a description of the shatteredness of human existence, of man's isolation, and of his tragic effort to close the gap that sets him apart. The neurotic suffers from an intolerable anxiety that transforms the simplest human relation into a compulsive struggle in which the manipulation of others affords only temporary respite from his own insecurity. The paranoid and the schizophrenic have become rigid in their rejection of community: one with the fixed notion that the outside world is hostile and persecutory, and the other with a tendency to withdraw and to become preoccupied with himself. We have noted from time to time the community's participation in this tendency to divide man—spirit from matter in philosophy, mind from body in medicine, and body from soul in religion. Even in the care of the sick we have tended to intensify loneliness by almost obsessive rituals of isolation in hospitals and sick rooms. An illustration of this tendency has been the prevailing custom, in our efficient hospitals, of separating mother and child soon after birth. Thus, one of the first experiences of the infant is that of isolation. Fortunately, there is a growing tendency, where possible, to keep mother and child in closer contact. When this is extended to profound preparation for and adjustment to the delivery of a child, the shock of birth is partially absorbed.

Anxiety is the inevitable component of isolation. The child at birth is thrust into a world quite different from that which he knew in the protective experience of the womb.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Luther, *Works* (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Co. and Castle Press, 1915), II, 18.

His helplessness and dependency set off reactions that are later to characterize anxiety in adult behavior. If it happens that birth and early infancy are accompanied by no genuine love and affection from significant people around him, there is every likelihood that he will soon adopt a pattern of compliance or aggression to protect himself against that world "he never made" and in which he feels alone. But since such behavior is designed to punish a hostile world, it is motivated by much hostility and is accompanied by guilt feelings. Indeed, behind neurotic behavior in general, there is a basic insecurity of the individual that is determined both by his reaction to primal anxiety and by the reflected appraisals of those people intimately associated with him. Malignant interpersonal relations in the family and in society are the breeding grounds of that anxiety, guilt, and hostility that ultimately wreak havoc upon the unity of man's personality.

In religious terms we have held that primal anxiety accompanies man's leap into existence. Man's harmony within himself and with the ground of his being is symbolized by his essential goodness in creation. His disruption and contradictory behavior in existence is the *fact* of his sin. Man's fall is not an event that took place once and for all in Adam and Eve; it is a part of the experience of every man. In anxiety man is tempted to secure himself by desperate means against the primordial insecurity that he feels. He resorts to conscious and unconscious devices to hide from himself the terrifying truth of his helplessness. Thus primal anxiety that might be resolved in faith is, instead, transformed into the driving anxiety of man's life in sin.

Two factors relating to the functioning of the whole personality seem to be well-established facts in psychoanalytic practice. The first is that behavior has meaning. A pattern repeated again and again is meaningful in terms of the history and responses of a given personality. The second formulation is that unconscious motives play their part in human activity. The given pattern may relate to an indi-

vidual's unconscious desire to punish or to submit to the authoritarian figures in his life. Therapists have discovered that health for the individual, suffering from ambivalent motives, lies in the direction of bringing together his conscious and unconscious life in a corrective interpersonal experience that permits him gradually to see the meaning of his behavior and to regain communication with the various parts of his total personality; in short, to recover his unity and to resolve his hostility and guilt.

It is in the light of these facts about man's health and of these insights of psychiatry into its preservation that we have interpreted religious symbols and that we turn now to the sacrament of Holy Communion. We must emphasize that a symbol, by definition, grows out of an *intrinsic association* between the experience and its form of expression. Its meaning, including its emotional and intellectual factors, is grasped by faith and insight, which are functions of the total personality. Religious symbols are not restrictive scientific formulae; they are grounds of participating reality, which convey meaning to the whole man. The ancient Church healed man's brokenness by providing him with specific means to confess and to experience forgiveness of his sin, and by incorporating him into the *Koinonia*. That holy fellowship through the centuries has provided a healing emotional experience in which believers have been bound together in faith and hope, laughter and tears.

It is informative to compare the ancient Church's understanding of the Eucharist with later interpretations. The sense of unity and solidarity in the ancient world made it quite natural to experience the *holy* in the elements of bread and wine, quite apart from elaborate explanations as to how the holy is present. But it would seem that by the time the late medieval Church promulgated the doctrine of transubstantiation, the ancient, unconscious unity of spirit and nature was already beginning to break down. Some writers suggest that the anxiety that accompanied the break-up of

the medieval synthesis was the driving force behind the elaborate doctrinal formulations. At any rate, the doctrine of transubstantiation appears to be a conscious effort to deny what in fact was beginning to be present in the unconscious—namely, doubt and uncertainty about the sacrament. Indeed, the whole late medieval emphasis upon doctrinal exactitude and elaborate schemes to gain merit may be viewed in one aspect as frantic efforts to still the anxiety and the doubt that was springing from man's innermost being. In this light, the Reformation and the Renaissance were in part further outward manifestations of these rising doubts. The actual presence of Christ in the Eucharist became increasingly difficult to maintain in a world that was losing its sense of unity and solidarity.

Psychologically, we stand on the opposite side of the late medieval problem in understanding the sacrament of Holy Communion. Our hearts yearn for the efficacy of this sacrament, but our minds are still indentured slaves to rationalism. There are many signs of change. In recent years, most of the Protestant churches have moved in the direction of a high and emotionally profound regard for Holy Communion, while still consciously rejecting it as a specific locus of the Holy. In the Anglican Communion and in certain Roman Catholic and Protestant "new life" communities, the Eucharist has become the focus of renewal and the heart of social concern. Indeed, while the theologians still debate the great issues of reunion, a quiet revolution has been taking place throughout the Church in which liturgical revival, biblical theology, and communal rebirth find their common quickening in this sacrament. It is possible that those who have lived in brokenness are now unconsciously reaching out for this experience of oneness; but the problem remains that they are still the children of a Cartesian world in which the very idea of sacrament poses real difficulties.

The Holy Communion is a symbol full of intimate association with the deepest experience and needs of man's

life. The bread and wine used are themselves products of nature, which become bearers of spiritual meaning and saving power by their very dedication in the sacrament. As food, given by a loving Father, they are associated with love and endowed with a positive self value. Menninger has pointed out that being given food is the first experience of love the child understands and that there is a significant relation between this fact and the Christian sacrament.<sup>13</sup> Love precedes genuine self-regard in every area of man's life: Thus, "we love Him because He first loved us."

Holy Communion is first of all *corporate* action, in which the whole of creation participates. It is God's way of gathering His own unto Himself again, and it is once and for all centered in human experience by the specific direction: "Take, eat, this is my Body which is broken for you." In obedience to this command, man, as a participant, joins his own creative powers to God's action, and finds thereby his deepest fulfillment.

The sacrament is not, therefore, just contemplation nor pious meditation, but *action* toward the realization of man's salvation. In terms of psychodrama, man acts out the conditions of his recovered health. St. Thomas Aquinas spoke of the Eucharist as "re-presenting" the actual sacrifice of Christ in such a way that man participates in it and derives benefits from it. This emphasis is retained in the Roman missal in the prayer for the feast of Corpus Christi:

O Lord, we beseech thee, be pleased to grant unto thy Church the gifts of unity and peace, which by these offered gifts are mystically signified: through Jesus Christ our Lord . . .<sup>14</sup>

There are at least two broad therapeutic benefits which are ours in Holy Communion: we offer a *sacrifice* in which

<sup>13</sup> Karl Menninger, *Love Against Hate* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1943), p. 278.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted by Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Dacre Press, 1945), p. 248.

we experience expiation for hostility and guilt, and we receive loving *communion* in which the healing of disrupted and broken lives is possible. As we have noted frequently in this study, hostility and guilt are two inseparable parts of man's distorted existence. They must be dealt with in realistic terms, or else they continue to play their role in the unconscious. To give them up is, in a sense, to give up a part of the self, and this can be accomplished only when there is a shift of the whole personality from anxiety to Christian faith. It is the goal and purpose of self-examination, confession, and the preparation that must precede one's coming to Holy Communion to secure this profound change. Here, before the altar, such a sacrifice requires a willingness to give up the self with its hostility and guilt, in order to be made whole again. The benefit of the sacrament is real only when the sacrifice exacts a genuine offering. The gifts of the holy sacrifice symbolize the offering of the self wholly, even as Christ offered Himself. Here one is brought to the deepest realization of those words that are the very heart of the Gospel:

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it (Matthew 16:25, AV).

#### SUMMARY

Basically, the Eucharist makes real the experience of atonement (or at-one-ment) in the Christian Church. The profound benefit of the sacrament is "at-oneness" with Christ and, through Him, with oneself and with the world. Where the experience of Holy Communion is a reality, man is in fact no longer a slave to alienation and anxiety. In that moment the unqualified love of God and the spontaneity of living are his. He is at one not only within himself, but with angels and archangels and with the whole Creation that shares that fullness of the glory of God. This is God's answer

to the tragedy and brokenness of our lives. This is healing for our deepest fear, for as the poet Donne has said,

Who can fear death this night  
That hath had the Lord of life  
In his hand today?

## LIVING THROUGH ANXIETY

Anxiety is the condition of our living. It is a part of our freedom and of our striving for selfhood. It is tragic only in the sense that in existence it tends to become the driving force behind our distorted lives of sin and guilt, anger and alienation. Christianity is a way of living through anxiety by faith. Its locus is the community of those who have responded to the saving act of God in Christ. The mystery of that "blessed company" is its gift of faith for anxiety, where faith restores and love heals the wounds of anxiety. No man lives beyond anxiety; but every man lives within the reach of God's recovery of man. A familiar hymn in Christendom, *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, invokes the Holy Spirit, whose gifts include "blessed unction from above"—the only healing for man's disfigurement. The petition begins at the right place and asks for the right gift:

Anoint and cheer our soiled face  
With the abundance of Thy grace.

The soiled face of modern man looks anxiously for peace where there is no peace, for health and salvation in gods that have no capacity to heal or to save. He cannot live without his civilization, and certainly one of his most serious problems is learning to live within it. More and more modern man is forced into loneliness and isolation, and deeper anxiety is the unfailing component of that isolation. The primal anxiety of existence and neurotic anxiety are fused in the process of living, with the total result that life

becomes driven by a relentless compulsion that defies effective control.

Man is anxious, and the deepest sting is his fear that his suffering is ultimately meaningless. His anxiety is compounded of separation from God and of the distortions of an exacting and anxiety-ridden environment. It leaves him with the conviction that existence itself is painful and meaningless. Man cries out in the dark night of his soul for deliverance from this torment. He finds little to assuage his pain in the limited world of secularism; and even his worship of God may be frustrated by a diminished horizon that is a part of his anxious self-concern.

#### **RECOVERY OF THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT**

The answer to man's isolation is beginning to appear in the modern world's recovery of the life of the spirit. I use the word *recovery* because the idea of spirit (in the sense of breath, or wind, or energy), as the invisible basis of life, was a universal assumption in the ancient world. Both the writers of Genesis and the ancient Greek philosophers shared this assumption. There was no necessary dichotomy between spirit and matter in that ancient view, nor was the spirit confined in its manifestation to intelligence or ethereal phenomenon. The word spirit has always been man's way of designating vital force in action. It cannot be confined or limited, yet it finds expression in all creation. While some of the ancients actually identified spirit with God, most could have given assent to the statement: In spirit we live and move, and have our being.

The modern world of secularism, by implication if not by intent, has ignored this larger life of the spirit. It has tended to confine reality to physical matter and to disregard the wider implications of spiritual life. In our culture this has resulted in a distorted emphasis upon empirical facts that have been disengaged from the spiritual and religious

aspect of truth and value. Academic education has moved more and more in the direction of the accumulation of facts, while making little effort to relate these facts to ultimate meaning and truth. The image of our life thus produced has prompted some writers to call ours "a cut flower culture." This disjunctive, spectatorial attitude is one of the reasons why modern man is suffering from "a case of nerves!" Nerve ends must bear the burden of our contradictory existence if empiricism is the limit of our view of reality.

But there is a stirring in educational circles—indeed, in the whole realm of science—a tendency to look for correlative truth and value in the total area of man's living. A revolution has taken place in physical science with the removal of the division between energy and matter in man's view of reality. The Einstein equation,  $E = mc^2$ , means that energy and matter are perpetually interchangeable. This understanding calls for an entirely new, dynamic approach to truth: energy is matter in motion. The old Cartesian dualism is inadequate. Any view of reality must take into account this rediscovered note of unity and wholeness.

We have observed a similar revolution in psychosomatic medicine, where the spiritual and motivational side of man's life is related once more to his total functioning. Perhaps the most crucial factor in modern man's recovery of the spirit has been his excruciating loneliness and disintegration, as he has tried, apart from the life of the spirit, to withstand the blows of modern history. In war and the separations necessitated by it, in prison camps, and in states subjected to secret police methods, the recovery of the spirit and the spiritual life has become a necessity. The writer has heard of a small group of men that met regularly in Germany throughout the Hitlerite regime in the very teeth of Gestapo vigilance. Their only communication with one another was to read aloud the New Testament, the works of Goethe and Shakespeare, and to hear the music of Bach, but by this

they preserved the life of the spirit and were saved from despair.

Recovery of spirit is also recovery of wholeness. Throughout this study, we have noted the deep concern for wholeness in every approach to the problem of understanding human behavior. To experience release from anxiety is to recover a part of the personality that has been lost. To move in the direction of recovered faculties is again to approach wholeness—that state in which the recovered self relates spontaneously on every level of human existence. The idea of wholeness in modern thought conceives of man, neither as the sum of his integral parts nor as a physical body with spiritual faculties, but as a living entity whose thinking, willing, and acting are all expressions of his total being. Psychoanalysis has used this approach in order to understand the function of anxiety in man and to assist him in the recovery of health. The beginning of recovered wholeness is dramatically illustrated in the case of the woman whom Frieda Fromm-Reichmann describes in *Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy*.<sup>1</sup> This patient had failed to respond to ordinary therapy and had withdrawn to the extent of absolute muteness. Still the doctor visited her every day and continued to offer her a genuine relationship that demanded no particular response. Then one day, the doctor's charge blurted out, "I don't know why you keep trying. I'm not interested!" Negative as this seems, the therapist was encouraged because the patient had spoken, and she suggested that they continue on her (the doctor's) faith. A year and a half later, when she was really on the road to recovery, the patient recalled this experience as the turning point in her illness. Dr. Fromm-Reichmann had succeeded in convincing the woman that her personal interest was genuine and given without condition. The patient was able

<sup>1</sup> Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, *Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), pp. 110 ff.

to respond to that gift and to begin the crucial recovery of her wholeness.

It is important to note that in this case the happy outcome began with the quality of the relation offered to the patient. The physician gave more than the cold stones of efficient techniques. Her relation to this woman was characterized by a spiritual attitude that made it possible to give an unencumbered gift. This is how the Kingdom of God comes, not with fanfare and trumpets, but in that spiritual meeting in which creation is quietly restored. For the Christian the meaning of life is spiritual. It is discovered in relationship. The heart of the Christian message is the proclamation that God, the Spirit, is being made manifest in the realities of this world as He is supremely manifested in the person of Christ. The rediscovery of the Spirit by modern man—the recovery of the fullness and meaning of life in real meeting—is something of a recapitulation of the experience of the early Church. St. Paul discovered that the Spirit is found where the fruits of the Spirit are found—in love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. It is the Spirit who shapes and forms the new man beyond the ravages of anxiety. Recovered wholeness is another fruit of the Spirit.

#### PSYCHOTHERAPY AND CHRISTIAN FAITH

It should be clear, from what we have said, that psychotherapy and Christian faith have some common goals. Both are concerned with removing the blocks that keep man from self-realization. Both deal with the experience of anxiety and are concerned with providing relaxation of that anxiety in a new reformation of the whole person. Where there is neurotic distortion of interpersonal relations, the experience and techniques of psychotherapy may be necessary before Christian symbols can be meaningful. Psychoanalysis stands with the prophetic voice of the Hebraic-Christian tradition in challenging man to look to the real motives by which

he lives. Indeed, it is possible that God has raised up this voice of scrutiny in order to expose the false god made in man's own image. In that sense Nietzsche was right when he declared that God is dead. The old domesticated half gods must leave before the real God comes. In the business of expelling the half gods, psychotherapy has played a vital role. It has asked the same questions that Isaiah asked:

To whom then will you liken God,  
or what likeness compare with him? (*Isaiah 40:18*).

Man in his anxiety attempts to possess God, to shape Him as an idol and to use Him as a shield from the cold winds of reality. But God will not be possessed nor used. He hides from man. He forsakes him who would use Him. He will not become an object, for He is the God who specifically forbids images. As J. H. Oldham has said, ". . . we cannot talk about God. We can only talk to Him. Where God is concerned, the only language open to us is prayer."<sup>2</sup>

While psychoanalysis is an aid in exposing false gods, it is limited as a total view of life. Techniques that provide greater knowledge of the self cannot be elevated into schemes of salvation. Any science that has succumbed to the temptation of scientism (the elevation of relative truth to absolute truth) is simply another form of idolatry—the adoration of the mind by the mind. Psychotherapy should not attempt, nor should it be expected to attempt, the answering of religious questions. The task of psychotherapy lies in the direction of assisting and strengthening man's use of his own capacities to the end that his life may be more satisfying. Religious faith, on the other hand, is concerned with relating man at every level of his being to that ultimate Reality, "in whose service is perfect freedom."

The methods of psychotherapy have helped man to understand himself and his own struggle. They are means

<sup>2</sup>J. H. Oldham, *Life Is Commitment* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1952), p. 47.

of restoring the relation between motive and action. These same methods have produced rich insights about the way in which culture and conditioning shape personality. By analysis we are now able to chart the effect of environment. Even so, we should not permit this analytic attitude to obscure the fact that human beings fight their decisive battles within themselves. To say that man is largely influenced by his environment, is not to say that he is simply a passive object. The fact that he is able to assess in some measure his own involvement in the culture is evidence that man is still man, not a stick or stone. In the end, it is man's deciding that makes sense or chaos out of his relation to his world.

Secular psychiatry, although it would replace religion, will continue to be disturbed by man's guilt beyond guilt feelings and man's sin beyond neurotic aggression or compliance. The brokenness and deep disturbance in man's nature that is indicated by manifestations of sin and guilt cannot be healed simply by growth. Nor is human forgiveness strong enough to break the cycle of anger and retribution that reaches back through the generations to the origin of existence. That wound needs healing, beyond medical arts and beyond human therapy, in God, the Creator, in whose love alone man is restored. This therapy depends upon death and resurrection, judgment, repentance, forgiveness and newness of being in faith and love. Christ warned his disciples, "Without me you can do nothing." I take that to mean that all our striving, without faith in Christ, leads but to negation, to nothingness. Here we confront the tragedy of modern man, who is, as one novelist put it, "too sophisticated to believe in God and too frightened to believe in nothing."

From the Christian viewpoint, man's isolation and diminished living is a darkness that only the strong love of God can dispel. Within that love he may live not only by means of insight and understanding, but also through faith,

a faith that re-evaluates the meaning of existence in terms of that love.

But where does one begin? The prophet Hosea counseled a fear-tormented Israel to break up her fallow ground and to seek Jehovah again. Anxiety lies beneath the surface of man's life; deep furrows and toilsome work are exacted of one who would know and answer the anxiety of existence in faith. For that requires, first of all, knowing the faith one actually lives by—the real motives that issue in one's way of life. The searching and the being searched that are required if a man is to break up his fallow ground, can be endured only within loving relations; and for the Christian, within the grace of God. It is painful to learn the truth about oneself and to be renewed beyond that knowledge. Nicodemus learned from Christ that it is like being born again with travail and pain.

The hazard involved in searching the self is deeply personal. Just as the retreat from life is an escape from personal awareness, so also to turn and face life and one's self will involve heightened and painful self awareness. Perhaps this is why so many people are content with only a mild form of Christianity. The plumbing of their depths has frightened them away from the real thing. But it is just this fear that has transformed "mild Christianity" into a demon religion in many people for whom to "be Christian" is to be rigidly proper and sterile and to exchange the Christian truth about man for a fatuous sentimentality. Genuine faith is renewed only by praying continuously the words of the Psalmist:

Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart;  
prove me, and examine my thoughts (Psalm 139:23).

#### **DEMONIC POSSESSION IN MODERN MAN**

Biblical faith is a continuing challenge to the idolatries of man. It is forever seeking the ground of men's hearts,

trying the faith by which they live. The false gods of ancient Israel and the demon possessions of modern man are brothers under the skin. They share a common weakness: they have no power to save. Indeed, the writer of Judges voiced the prophetic challenge to all idolatry with these words: "Go and cry to the gods whom you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress" (Judges 10:14). False gods, however, cannot deliver in time of distress or anxiety.

The anxiety of existence demands a faith. Worship in some form is a necessity of living. Whether or not he worships consciously, man is the kind of animal that must have meaning and ultimate concerns; even if his ultimate concern is to deny meaning. It is obvious that not all religion is included under the heading of "religion." Indeed, for many sophisticated moderns, indifference to organized religion is a fetish. Look behind that façade of unconcern and one discovers a frantic search for salvation—for a god that can save. Polytheism was the conscious problem of the ancient world, and it is the unconscious problem of our age. In the necessity of living through anxiety, man seeks the god of his salvation; and the crucial question is whether he worships idols or that God alone, who saves him by restoring him to genuine freedom and selfhood in relatedness.

Christ addressed himself to the demon possessions of his day. These false gods that took possession of and tormented the souls of many were driven out in the name of God's healing purpose. Here was beginning the mighty works of the age to come:

But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you (Luke 11:20).

The demon possessions of modern man are the false "worships" that operate beneath the conscious surface of

his life as his answer to anxiety. These function as idols in that they demand total commitment in return for the false promise of salvation. The claims of these false worships are anonymous and not immediately evident to man, but sincere reflection and self-searching is more than likely to reveal the signs of their presence.

One sign is perfectionism, a way of life in which a person is ruthlessly intolerant of every mark of weakness. It is as if the victim had said to himself, "Without absolute perfection I cannot abide myself or others." This frantic striving to keep on top leads man inexorably to an alienation from self, as he progressively reduces the area of his living in order to maintain the fiction of impeccability. For such a person, the Sermon on the Mount and the Christian counsels to perfection lose their relation to the Kingdom of God, where judgment is joined with forgiveness; instead, they become a new moralism, rather than the basis of new covenant relation. It seems obvious that rigid perfectionism destroys the possibility of genuine relations within the self or with others. A perfectionistic mother or father cannot help being more concerned with proving the fiction that their children are superior than with really knowing and loving the children for themselves.

"Drivenness" is another sign of false worship. To be driven is to move at the impulse and command of forces alien to oneself, to act because one is forced to act, and thereby to lose one's freedom and selfhood. The loss of freedom and selfhood is always the occasion of anger; and the amount of anger in our common life is in some measure the drivenness of modern living. Karen Horney has a brilliant analysis of this aspect of our culture in her last book, *Neurosis and Human Growth*. There she traces out the manifold ways in which the destructive "search for glory" becomes the compulsive drive that robs all life of fulfillment. A wish or a need, understandable in itself, becomes a claim,

a tyrannous claim, dominating the life of its victim. The perfectionist, for instance, is driven to fulfill the claims of his rigid conscience.

But our submission to alien forces is more strikingly evident in our slavery to routine, our uneasy and unrecreative use of leisure, and our inability to be alone with ourselves. A person with whom the writer was counseling experienced this feeling in a dream wherein she found herself on a ferris wheel that was "forever going up and down." These descriptive words bear significant relation to the reply of Satan in the story of Job, when the Lord asked him, "Whence have you come?"

From going to and fro on the earth,  
and from walking up and down on it (Job 1:7).

Demonic life is a dreary walking up and down the ways of this world exactly because it is motivated by a worship that knows nothing of "quietness and confidence." Demonic life is cut off from the source of renewal, from God Himself.

False worship ultimately reveals itself as a worship of the self that is at the same time contempt of the self. Man's essential relation to God in creation (the basis of his self acceptance) is broken in self-idolatry, and he hates himself precisely because he cannot save himself. Every idolatry is a "proud worship," as well as a vain worship. It is measured in brokenness and destruction for countless lives. Perhaps this fact lends weight to those words in the *Magnificat*:

He hath showed strength with his arm;  
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their  
hearts.

Idolatry arises not merely from impaired human relations, but from a broken relation between man's "I" and the "Thou" of God. It is this profound disruption that reduces man to the stature of a thing that must convert every other person into a thing, in the fruitless effort to

prove his own worth. Friendship, love, and community become possessions that, like every other object possessed, are used in his own unsuccessful search for justification. The futility of that search, while apart from God, issues in the anger that man feels against himself, which, when translated into destructive aggression and hostility, becomes a characteristic mark of this age. The ambivalence remains: self-worship is also contempt of the self.

The temptation of idolatry is renewed with every generation. It is as deep in man as his own doubt, and as subtle as his pride. Only the form changes. Where yesterday men were tempted, in the picturesque translation of Moffatt of a verse from Psalm 106, "to barter God, their glory, for the image of an ox that munches grass"; today they barter God for an idol that their science makes, an image that may be only a little more refined. Idolatry enters man through pride; and for modern man, the words of Christ that if the eye is not sound, the whole body is full of darkness, goes to the heart of the matter. Man's capitulation to idolatry is foreshadowed in his ambivalence; his purity of heart is already corrupted because, as Kierkegaard put it, he does not will to be one thing: to be himself in the eyes of God. With this pervasive aspect of the temptation to idolatry in mind, we propose now to bring it into focus through the three classic temptations of Christ (Matthew 4).

In the first of these temptations, the devil issues the challenge, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." Jesus answers:

It is written,  
"Man shall not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of  
God."

This incident occurs during Jesus' fast in the wilderness, when the need for food was heightened by His self-imposed discipline. It represents the temptation to give oneself over

to bodily satisfactions. The vital desires of man's life—food, sex and self-expression are not evil in themselves. They become demonic when man attempts to live by his vitality alone. Here is an idolatry widely encountered in our age.

The temptation to worship oneself as vitality is evident in our preoccupation with retaining youth, in our consuming interest in sex, food, and drink, and in that busy activity that seems to mount with our years. Let us be reminded that this idolatry is not confined to the more dramatic sins of a Don Juan or the pleasures of the primrose path! The drive behind these expressions is the same as that which keeps man forever on the move, forever seeking new conquests, although never finding the satisfactions he expects in his actual living. Who has not encountered the pathetically "good" people of our community, who live for achievements' sake, believing that "actions speak louder than words," or that "nothing succeeds like success," and whose every achievement leaves them more empty and nearer defeat. Sometimes such people are called "do gooders," but those who do the name calling can measure their own involvement in this demonic possession by looking into their own homes, where too often families are split by resentment with sons and daughters even hating their parents and their "good works" because anxiety in the service of busyness has robbed them of the parent they have never known.

Job discovered that to live is to know that there is "a warfare to man upon earth":

I am not at ease,  
nor am I quiet;  
I have no rest;  
but trouble comes (Job 3:26).

The temptation that man faces in this inescapable trouble is to take it upon himself busily to avoid it, to live sensu-

ously, to "live to the limit," rather than living through his trouble in a faith-love relation to God. Job found no other answer to his problems, but he did come to a relationship with God whom he now knew in a new way. He put it this way:

I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,  
but now my eye sees thee . . . (Job 42:5).

The anxiety behind the worship of the self, as vitality, is betrayed by the constant desire to prove oneself. Frequently, this takes the form of the anxious pursuit of "rules to live by." There is an episode in the life of Christ about which it is told that He was confronted by the bald demand for a sure formula. In the Gospel of St. John (6:28-29), the people are pictured, as asking: "What must we do, to be doing the work of God?" His answer must have been a disappointment to His hearers, as it is a disappointment to everyone who seeks to save himself by his own works:

This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.

The one thing required of the person busily engaged in proving himself, and the most difficult thing for him to give, is that he put his trust in the trustworthiness of God in Jesus Christ. For this sacrifice one must learn that nothing he can do or say will suffice when meeting and responding to God in Christ is the requirement. Such a sacrifice means death to the anxious desire for security in works. It can also mean new birth through confidence in Christ, who has been proved once and for all.

In the second temptation, Satan speaks from the high mountain and the vista of the kingdoms with all their glory:

All these will I give you,  
if you will fall down and worship me.

Jesus replies:

Begone, Satan! for it is written,  
“You shall worship the Lord your God  
and him only shall you serve.”

The temptation to live by the power and possession of things stands behind much of the self-idolatry and self-contempt in the children of this age. It is as if a man had said to himself in his innermost being, “I’ll never get by on my own. I must please people and bribe them to like me!” At heart, this is a rejection of the givenness of one’s self. It is rejection of God. One does not trust either the self God has given or God Himself. Hence, this man is caught in the frantic pursuit of possessions and services by which he hopes to keep others obligated to him. The paradox of self-worship and self-contempt is the spur behind the adulation of power in man’s life.

The temptations of power and possessions are quite evident in the rearing of our children. One learns rather early in life to place a high value on the possession of things or on the faculty for being useful to or for impressing others. Thus, the talent for manipulation becomes the means whereby one seeks satisfactions in life. But the spoiled child and the immature adult both suffer the frustrating experience that manipulation of others brings no genuine satisfaction in living. And their suffering is more than a frustration. It is a reflection of the tragic role of a sin that exchanges man’s fundamental relation to God and to others for the worship of self, a self-worship that takes the form of power for control. The radical claims of God must be set against this idolatry with the emphatic emphasis upon the words: *“and him only shalt thou serve.”*

The worship of the self as power has been dramatically illustrated in the political history of modern man. But this large canvas may obscure the more intimate role that this idolatry plays in our common life. Faust is a true child of modern history in that he gave up his soul for the knowledge

that would enable him to control others. Insofar as science has become the object of worship and the means of domination, it has followed the Faustian course. Indeed, instances of the temptation to give oneself over to the pursuit of power need not be sought beyond the boundaries of daily interpersonal relations. Every counselor is concerned with families where anxiety in the service of power has tempted the parents to dominate their children's lives with tragic results that are recognizable in broken marriages and unfulfilled lives. Manipulation either by strength or by weakness tends to reduce human relations to "I-it," where the human element disappears. In *Mrs. McThing* the playwright advances the theme that human relations cannot be walled in and protected. To treat another person as a "stick" is to become a "stick" oneself. The prohibition against covetousness in the Bible seems relevant here. It is more than an injunction against desiring a neighbor's goods. It is the recognition that man's idolatry reduces both his neighbor and himself to the status of goods and chattels. Covetousness is a vanity through which man tries to save himself by possessiveness, and its course leads inexorably to his destruction and to that of his neighbor.

In the third temptation, the devil transported Christ to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple.

If you are the Son of God, he jeered, throw yourself down; for it is written,

"He will give his angels charge of you,"  
and

"On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you strike your foot against a stone!"

Jesus answered him:

Again it is written,

"You shall not tempt the Lord your God."

It is to be noted that the devil quotes Scripture here to support his proposition! The temptation to use God for

our own purposes is the perennial attraction of magic. It is, as someone has aptly remarked, to make religion our God, rather than God our religion. It is to appropriate the prerogatives of God for ourselves in self-worship.

The lure of magic is very strong, and it is not easy to discern. There is always a chance that it stands behind our turning to religion. The crucial question is whether or not our worship frees us for a more spontaneous participation in life. The use of piety to solve personal problems may and frequently does include an attempt to bend God to our own will. The unconscious motive is evident here in a rigid anxiousness about "doing things just the right way" and in the anger that inevitably accompanies the failure of this effort to coerce God. There are countless people in our parishes, as well as in the secular congregations of community life, who are forever ready to demand of their "priests" that they make new gods when they find that the one God can not be ordered about. This is the perennial demand of a people impatient in waiting upon God. So it was with the Hebrews:

Up, make us gods, who shall go before us . . . (Exodus 32:1).

The temptation and the pressure to transform religion into magic emphasizes the necessity that priests be not only pastors, but also prophets. The prophetic word stands against every worship that takes the "name of the Lord God in vain."

The insights of modern psychology can prove helpful in our understanding of the real function that our religion serves and in clearing the way for the work of genuine faith. The hospital chaplain encounters a patient whose recovery from a simple physical injury has been impeded by emotional turmoil. In conversation he learns that the patient has assumed a religious attitude that serves as a rigid cover for feelings of guilt, derived from childhood

problems. The answer to the patient's need goes deeper than simply encouraging her to give up her unnecessary guilt feelings. It lies in the direction of helping her to find the God who, although He searches and judges us, also loves us infinitely. It is God alone, who can destroy the false patterns of religion that we fashion to meet our mistaken needs. It is God alone, who saves.

The words of the devil suggest why the temptation to false religion seems to be so deeply rooted in human behavior: man's belief in his right to be kept from hurt or harm. This attitude persists in Christianity despite the centrality of the crucifixion. It is a false belief that arrogantly assumes that God may be used for the protection of one person or group over others. Jonah represents this temptation in the Old Testament. He was sent to save the Ninevites, but because he believed that God was the exclusive possession of the Hebrews, he performed the task with some reluctance! The Ninevites' subsequent repentance brought no joy to Jonah. It, like the loss of his shady covering, infuriated him. As he sat "angry even unto death," he was shown the fundamental fallacy of his religion. He had hoarded his God as his own possession, just as he had appropriated the gourd for shade. He had labored for neither. But his own grief in the loss of the gourd is but a very pale reflection of God's infinite concern for the people of Ninevah. There is both judgment and grace in this story: judgment on the attempt to keep religion as a magic charm, grace in the infinite love of God for those that know Him not.

The insistence upon the right to be kept from hurt or harm, whether it be in the individual or in a people, is a symptom of false worship. Its center of gravity is well illustrated by the complaint of a mother whose daughter was having difficulty, the complaint that "God would let just this happen to my child." If these words do not seem widely representative, one need only reflect that many people think of their church as a club in which, as long as

dues are paid and requirements reasonably observed, the heavenly powers are obligated to protect the members from misfortune. Needless to say, such organized idolatry is always breaking down. God does not bargain with man. His grace is freely given and must be freely received. Man may always enter into loving communion with the reconciling God in Christ. In such a relation he possesses the courage to be, even in disaster.

The false worships of modern man recall again the vital significance of the fundamental Hebrew-Christian belief: one God worshipped through love in heart, soul, and mind. The false gods are expelled when the one God comes in truth. But the demon possessions of man are never exorcized except through much prayer and fasting, and ultimately only by the finger of God. That God has acted redeemerly at this crucial juncture is the basic Christian affirmation. Jesus is the Christ! Man's recovery is accomplished in that decisive action. It remains for man to claim by faith the victory over idolatries that God has wrought in the event of Christ. That event is more than an idea, more than "a cunningly devised fable," even more than a fervent hope. It is an eye witness event, something that happened in history. It is a living reality that continues to happen in the flesh and blood witness of the community of the Holy Spirit.

Secular psychiatry is also concerned with the removal of the demons that enslave man; but the spiritual vacuity that results when this is attempted apart from God may, as in Christ's parable of the swept and garnished house, invite seven more deadly spirits, so that the last state of the man is worse than the first. For the Christian reconciliation takes place in a community of relations sustained by the Holy Spirit. This is symbolized in the great affirmations of Christianity which begin: "I believe in . . .," "Our Father who . . ." The Bible and the Church are woven into the patterns of life, into the stuff of history. Within this living reality,

there is present the hope of driving out the enslaving idolatries that the anxiety of existence spawns.

#### HOLY SPIRIT COMMUNITY

While spirit is universal, the message of the New Testament is that God has come with new and abiding presence in the Holy Spirit. He dwells in the community that rejoices in His redeeming power. As we have seen, man apart from some kind of saving community destroys both himself and the spirit that is within him, "having no hope and without God in the world." The loss of real community is one of the deeper reasons why this age is so involved in running away from self. Modern man is without a home. He is cut off, belonging nowhere. Yet he is not beyond God. His final loneliness is met by God in the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. There is strength here, and the courage to face and to recover the lost self. It is obvious that self-searching is intolerable apart from some kind of community. Even the self-searching of psychotherapy must proceed within community. The deeper purpose and end of all self-knowledge is the rediscovery of man's relation to God. For that a man must turn and face himself, and the strength of the community of grace reaches out to help. In the decisive moment, however, man must decide, and in deciding for or against God, his freedom is revealed again. Pascal has said, "He who has created us without our aid cannot save us without it."<sup>8</sup>

Man's recovery of himself, his recovery of wholeness, is accomplished within community. For the Christian, that community is the gift of the Holy Spirit; it precedes man and enables him to turn from alienation to a new life in relationship. Freedom is a curse unless man has the courage to use it creatively. Humanism would seek that courage in man himself. Mysticism looks for it outside of man. In the

<sup>8</sup> Quoted by Denzil G. M. Patrick, *Pascal and Kierkegaard* (London: Lutterworth, 1947), I, 181.

biblical view, the courage necessary for freedom is based upon a faith-trust relation to God. It is both within man as the restored image of God and beyond him in the being of God. It is realized through man's participation in the Holy Spirit community.

In the biblical view, man is enabled to use his freedom only insofar as he remains in a vital faith relation to God. Freedom is neither an autonomous possession of man, nor is it a capricious gift, doled out by God when man is "good." Like Ezekiel, man is unable to stand upon his own feet and speak his own words until the spirit of God enters his receptive heart, and then he is enabled to stand and to speak. Thus by the spirit of God, man's freedom and selfhood are strengthened. Through the spirit he has the courage to be himself in the eyes of God. The prophets were thus enabled to speak to a people that were hostile to their message. And St. Paul prayed that God would grant his fellow Christians at Ephesus

. . . to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love . . . may be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:16-19).

The fullness of man's freedom and selfhood is realized in relation to God. Modern psychiatry has rightly insisted that man cannot be more responsible than his freedom permits, and that he will accept responsibility to the degree that his freedom is realized. In a community of slaves it is unrealistic to expect man to act responsibly. But in a community where men are no longer slaves, but brothers, and free by faith, the community of responsibility becomes a possibility. In the community of faith man recovers his selfhood in relation to God, and he is *free for freedom*. The characteristic action of the Christian community throughout the ages has been *eucharist*, thanksgiving, for the freedom

of the new man in Christ. The liberty of Christian man is the product of faith beyond law. Wherever Christianity has been led into the byway of moralism and salvation by "ought," it has destroyed the meaning of Christian freedom. Man's *freedom for freedom* springs from his faith-trust relation to God; it cannot be produced by moral pronouncements.

Faith must involve more than assent to a set of ideas. It means a life of trust in the larger community of the Holy Spirit. In that wide fellowship worship and prayer are the means of communication. Everyone prays in the sense that life is a constant dialogue with the ultimate concerns. But prayer, too, has its idols, which are a part of the false worships of man. We have seen how these idolatries limit and isolate man. Genuine prayer breaks through the crusty, fallow surfaces of our individual separation and draws us into the common life of God's people. Worship is fulfilled when man, in adoration of God, brings His whole creation before Him in joyful praise and thanksgiving. Christianity in a way of redeemed relations within the Holy Spirit community.

For the early Christians, *Koinonia*, their fellowship, was the means of their access to the Holy Spirit. As they entered into that community of faith, they were caught up into the new life of God's astonishing power. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was shared by many who then exercised the gifts of the Holy Spirit and "continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42, AV). The mystery of that *Koinonia* was its note of strength in sharing. The Holy Spirit comes through participation, not in isolation. It is a gift realized only in community.

The Church (*ekklesia*), as it developed, was made up of those who had been called out of the world into *Koinonia*. In the New Testament, membership in that body is by baptism, which signifies incorporation into the living body

of Christ that is the people of God. The gift of the Holy Spirit is embodied in the Church, which is the locus of God's redeeming work. St. Paul reminded the Corinthians that "by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body . . ." (I Cor. 12:13). The essence of the Christian message is that God has visited and redeemed his people, who now live from faith to faith in the "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." Lest this be misunderstood as a prideful claim for "one of the churches," it should be added that the Church in this definition embraces more than the visible church. With St. Paul we must remember that we know only "in part" and that the ultimate judgment about the boundaries of God's Church belong to Him alone. It is a peculiar form of ecclesiastical idolatry that presumes that any man or church can usurp the seat of judgment that belongs to God only. But this we do know: that where the Church continues in the Apostle's teaching and fellowship, where the Bible is read and the Word of God is received, where the sacraments are prayerfully observed and the faith is joyfully proclaimed, there the Christian experience is possible. And it is possible only in relation to such a community, for individualism and basic Christianity are opposite poles.

Modern man may have understandable hesitancy in accepting the Church he knows. From history, he has learned of its role as an agent of authoritarianism emphasizing doctrine and its acceptance as more important than vital faith-trust relations. More recently, he has seen the Church become an escape for those that would be relieved of the necessity of facing the facts of his world as it is. These sad facts cannot be minimized; they are true. But the early Church came into her own in a hostile world, not by running away from life, but by becoming in fact man's true spiritual home, the place where he could live with his world. And something of the vigor of that early Church is stirring again within Christianity as she learns that she lives in an alien world. This is evidenced by the open missionary mindedness

which is gladly facing the facts of this world. An illustration of this open mindedness is the effort of the Church to relate her sacramental life to the wholeness of man's being, as that reality has been recovered by psychosomatic medicine. A happy sign evident in many communions is the recovery of the heart of the family-parish community in corporate worship and the rediscovered relevancy of biblical faith to the actual predicament of man. The facts discovered by modern science are the revelation of God's truth when, in faith, they are rewoven into the total fabric of His world. This is a crucial task of the Church in every age.

One of the ironies of modern history is that, in his enthusiasm to throw off the restraints of the Church, man has given himself over to the false gods of this culture, whose voracious demands afford him neither peace nor community. Secular loneliness is inescapable. The spirit of secularism hauls down the flag of Christianity in the name of individualism. It lowers the horizon of faith. It leads to isolation and despair. Even in his collectivist utopias, modern man discovers not real community, but, as one observer has put it, "atomism packed tight."

Anxious and alone man stands outside the Church and demands "moral values" that can be pressed into easy-to-take capsules. His troubled mind seeks those fruits of Christianity that he cannot have, unless he is willing to take his place in the life-giving plant, which is the Church. The gifts of the Holy Spirit will belong to man again when he comes out of his barricaded isolation into the community of faith and expectancy. He that stands outside and demands salvation will never know the spontaneity of a love that rejoices in hope and is "patient in tribulation."

The people of God are called into community, and the Church is that community. Its fellowship is the place where man may recover his lost humanity. The common proclamation of faith in the Apostles' Creed involves taking a stand in that relation (*I believe in . . .*) where the Holy

Catholic Church, as well as the Holy Spirit, the forgiveness of sins and the communion of Saints are affirmed together. Here the deepest needs of man are met and fulfilled. Here the supreme fruit of sacred fellowship, *agape*, may become a living reality. Christian faith does not end with the forgiveness of sins nor with relief from anxiety. It incorporates man into an ongoing transcendent community of the forgiven and the forgiving, where in moments of faith and love he lives beyond anxiety. Thus the Church through her life and sacraments provides healing for the tragic anxiety of existence. The Holy Spirit community is man's "native land," his home, where he recovers his lost wholeness and lives through anxiety.

#### B E Y O N D D E S P A I R

It is important to emphasize that the Christian way is one of living through anxiety, rather than of attempting to escape it. The goal of life is not "peace of mind," but faith and love that live through anxiety in the peace of God. Like the early Christians, we "must through much tribulation" enter the Kingdom of God. The facts of life teach us that we shall have to be able to endure uncertainty. It is a hard lesson to learn, because despair and the loss of meaning stand behind every uncertainty when our perspective is "this-world-only." There is an interesting paradox here. We, the children of this world, are fond of thinking that we are entirely self-sufficient; but we flee from tensions and are not above accepting the answers magic offers to our problems. It is significant that people that have rejected, as too fanciful, fairy tales in which love and perseverance and grace are virtues, have instead turned to the heroes of the comic strip, radio, and television, heroes who quite often are those that succeed by superhuman, indeed magic, powers.

So far as faith is concerned, man is not a tentative animal. He must live by some faith and in a kind of community, even though both may produce only a wearisome existence.

Christian realism is skeptical about the faith and community of modern man that promises so much and yields so little. It points to his false worships and feeble attempts at community and recalls the warning of Jeremiah that "slight healing" and cries of "peace, peace" leave festering sores that require deep healing.

The lesson of despair must not be evaded: The things that belong to man's peace require that he see himself in the light of despair, before he can know the new life in God's reconciling grace. "Weep not for me," Jesus told the women of Jerusalem, "but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke 23:28, AV). Despair is not lost, if it brings one to the need of redemption. The secret of despair is that we are not left alone. Otherwise, why cry out to God? It restores us again to the realities of life in which man is man, not a shining god. Unless his faith is more than a veneer of self-satisfaction to cover his despair, he will be forever driven to seek the meaning of his life in false gods. There is but one faith that can drive out these demons, one faith that, in the face of despair and meaninglessness, provides man with as good a reason for living as for dying. This is the Christian faith which lies beyond despair and which, in loving community, makes the threats man must endure the schoolmasters to bring him closer to God.

One of these threats is the reality of guilt beyond imagined guilt. To live is to become involved in a cycle of sin and estrangement that can only lead to despairing guilt, unless it can somehow be undone. Goethe has said that human action always involves a degree of unjustness: "only the spectator can preserve his conscience." The rigorous claims of the New Testament are meant to drive man from his citadel of anxious self-concern to restored relationship with God. Psychiatry has sometimes claimed that these demands of Christianity are too great. They lay impossible burdens upon man. This charge is justified when Christianity is viewed simply as a moral exercise. Here the Sermon on

the Mount becomes either a new legalism or the occasion for mass self-deception regarding its fulfillment. Those that reduce the faith to the Beatitudes or “the Golden Rule” only should take the time required to read the Gospels in which these statements appear: It is hardly an accident that Christ’s Sermon on the Mount ends with an admonition against anxiety, which is a warning to those who busily flee from its profound searching and a counsel to seek first the Kingdom of God where relationship precedes and nurtures the moral fruits of the Kingdom.

The claims of Christianity are intolerable apart from the grace and forgiveness of God. Taken alone these claims serve only to drive man deeper into despair. Indeed, the weight of unresolved guilt is another factor that contributes to the loneliness and diminished living from which modern man suffers. It is here that the “Christian” voice is mingled with the pagan, as they cry out in chorus, “Could it not somehow be undone?” Guilt unforgiven produces an anxious self-concern that is the epitome of sin. As Christians, we must remember that forgiveness must first be experienced in ourselves, before we can extend it to others; that when Christ referred to “the least of these little ones” who need alms and forgiveness, He most certainly meant us, who receive it with greatest difficulty.

The message and the witness of Christ is that it has already been undone! It has been undone in God’s forgiving action. In Christ God has already undone the sin and removed the guilt-barrier that separates man from every possibility of genuine reconciliation. The words of the Bible that are used for forgiveness and pardon bear the original meaning of removing that which stands between. Man’s sin and guilt are “covered,” “lifted up” and “carried away.” That great obstruction has been removed. Forgiveness is more than an idea. It is an event in history. The word has been passed down to us that the way is clear. We must join the throng that sings and marches on! For if one would

know the deep joy of that song, he must become a part of that army that moves forever into the presence of God with glad and thankful hearts. Forgiveness is something to be shared in community, where it becomes a living reality that re-creates humanity.

Judgment is another source of despair. Whether we call it the wrath of God or the anger of man, we know the meaning of judgment. Surely, the history of this generation has been written in wrath. As for Job, life has become for many a burden in which they are judged without quite knowing why. When man dispenses with the ultimate judgment that belongs to God alone, he himself becomes a merciless judge, who destroys both himself and his neighbor. The anxiety of modern man involves him in a never-ending cycle of judgment, wrath, and despair. The poet Auden speaks of the brooding "malcontents who might have been":

. . . self-judged they sit,  
Sad haunters of Perhaps . . .<sup>4</sup>

The amount of hostility and aggression which is readily expressed in contemporary life is some measure of the weight of self-judgment and the consequent unlived life.

Judgment is not without its lesson for man. For all his weariness with life, Job perceived that God cares in that he judges:

. . . And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one,  
And bringest me into judgment with Thee?

For Job, the experience of judgment was the occasion for the rediscovery of his relation to God. Here is a clue that points beyond the morass of wrath that grips modern man. The basic trouble lies in man's relation to God. No man escapes judgment. Existence and the possibility of freedom always produce crisis or judgment. Man's effort to escape

<sup>4</sup> Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*, p. 10. Used by permission of the publisher.

judgment amounts to an effort to flee from God and, thus, to escape the wrath of God. But the good news of Christianity is that while man is yet a sinner, trapped in his own wrath, God demonstrates his love in Christ to restore man to that fundamental relation. Indeed, God's mighty acts of grace in the biblical story bear the significance that God's judgment is His love and His love is judgment. These belong together. When either is separated from the other, a demon religion flourishes. *Agape* is both the means of man's self-fulfillment and a judgment upon every premature self-realization in sin. Love is a perpetual source of judgment upon every partial fulfillment of man under *law* or "works-righteousness," and it is the means of man's renewal beyond the dead-end of his own effort to justify himself. The Gospel states that Christ comes in the flesh, not once, nor merely in a second time, but that He comes again. He comes in every moment, and his coming breaks into every historical moment with the Word of God made Flesh. In that coming we are judged, but for redemption. Man's relation to God in love is both the source of his existence and the means whereby he may use his freedom to fulfill his selfhood. Without that relation and the community that nurtures it, wherein the grace of God heals the broken and completes the incomplete, man's freedom is cursed with destructive judgment. In every crisis or judgment God makes it possible for man, through forgiveness and reconciliation, to enter into the new creation while still living in the old world.

Death is the final absurdity of life apart from faith. It fills life with the dread of a meaningless journey to nowhere. It has become a matter of increasing concern to both psychiatry and theology that the fact of death is not met with honesty in this culture. It is either an occasion for much sentimentality, or it is repressed and avoided by curtained fear. It is interesting to note that De Tocqueville observed in 1835 that American preoccupation with the things of this world seemed to cover a fear of death. Apparently

death is the Achilles heel of a confident and pragmatic culture. Its finality seems so unsportsmanlike! The players are ejected before the final outcome is known, and everyone must enter this arena of confidence testing. Death becomes the symbol of meaninglessness in a people whose hopes have been anchored in this world only. Behind modern man's fruitless search for peace and for understanding in psychiatry and in new cults, there lies the threat of meaninglessness and the unanswered problem of death.

Man in anxiety finds it almost impossible to face the fact of death. His loved ones "pass away," and he and his friends enter a conspiracy to hide the facts. His funeral practices become the means of covering up the reality, rather than an aid to facing the truth honestly. The investigation of Lindemann and Fairbanks, at the Massachusetts General Hospital, of extended grief cases growing out of a disastrous fire tends to show that the successful handling of grief and emotional reorientation are greatly hindered by attitudes and religious practices that fail to face death as a fact.<sup>5</sup> In the Gospel of St. John (chapter 11), we see the reflections of the way in which the early Church handled this matter. Jesus is reported, in the story of Lazarus, first as saying that Lazarus' "sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God," a statement which some of the disciples apparently took to mean that Lazarus was not dead, but asleep. It became necessary for Christ to say "Lazarus is dead." The subsequent account of the raising of Lazarus should not hide the fact that Jesus set himself against the sentimentalism of evading death, by confusing it with sleep or by obscuring it with pat answers. ("I know that he shall rise again on the resurrection at the last day.") The raising of Lazarus then gave emphasis to Jesus' words:

I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

<sup>5</sup> Lindemann, Erich, "Symptomatology and Management of Acute Grief," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, CI (July, 1944), pp. 141-48.

The implications for the Christian community were clear: Even death cannot be used as an escape from the encounter with Him, in whom there is both resurrection and life. It is a peculiar form of pride in the living—perhaps even a *sickness unto death*—when anxious concern for the dead betrays an unwillingness to meet the Lord of life and death *now*. The early Church learned its lesson well, and beyond the days of God's mighty acts in Jesus, the ancient practice was to accept the fact of death, meeting it with a faith which knew that nothing could separate man from the love of God whom he had known in Christ. The Book of Common Prayer retains this emphasis when the Church gathers in the presence of death. The dead are committed to the earth with prayers and a recital of Christian faith in psalm, scripture, and creed wherein man's response embraces death—even death—within the community of resurrection:

I believe in . . . the Resurrection of the body:  
And the Life everlasting.

For the Christian the threat of death, like every other experience of anxiety, is met within a corporate fellowship that reaches beyond the tragic conditions of this life where sin has wrought the “sickness unto death.” His life in the Church is a constant reminder to the Christian that Christ came to heal and restore that which has been lost in sin. The buoyancy and strength of the Church in every age lies in the reality of life everlasting *now*:

We know that we have passed out of death into life,  
because we love the brethren (I John 3:14).

In every absolution for the penitent, in the words with which the sacrament of Christ's body and blood is administered, indeed, in the very fact of the sacraments the Church looks beyond this *sickness unto death* to life everlasting—and that as a present reality. It was in this spirit that St. Ignatius

of Antioch described the eucharistic breaking of bread as "the medicine of immortality."

The Christian stress on resurrection, rather than on immortality, further emphasizes the meaningfulness of existence as man has known it in the body. St. Paul spoke of the "spiritual-body" with which the Christian is clothed beyond life in the flesh, and this paradoxical expression is a way of conveying the Christian truth that God-recovered-wholeness in this life and beyond has relevance to the struggle in the flesh that we know *now*. The idea of immortality is easily corrupted into a way of escape into infinity, into a kind of second round of this life without the disturbances of real existence. In our culture it has become too often associated with the sentimental notion that something in man—his soul, his true self—does not have to die. But the Christian view is clear in insisting that, like Adam, all men must die. Those that are made alive in Christ do not escape death, but their *sickness unto death* is removed in that faith-trust community of resurrection. In this light the commitment of the self to that abiding community, the taking of one's stand in the risk of faith is but another way of losing one's life *to find it*.

#### SUMMARY

The "new being" in Christ is actual evidence that history is meaningful and that the Kingdom of God is beginning to come in Christian history. Throughout the years, Christ has offered a hearty, "Go thy way!" to those restored to wholeness in faith. This may account for that remarkable note of joy that has characterized the work and worship of those whose service is perfect freedom. The end of Christian living, as of faith and worship, is wholeheartedness:

We hymn while we sow  
And sing while we plough.

The impending realization of the Kingdom of God is another anxiety—the creative anxiety that presses for realization in the process of history. The Church, insofar as she is the genuine community of grace and the locus of God's Kingdom, is the answer to anxiety and despair, for here there may be perplexity, "but not in despair." Here the community of anxiety is translated into the fellowship of faith and love.

Christian faith relates to the deepest needs of man: to anxiety, to the threat of meaninglessness, and to bitter separation. It brings man into holy fellowship and sustains him in suffering and death. In that holy fellowship man and his dread fears are embraced in the imperishable love and mercy of God.

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# **ANXIETY AND FAITH**



# ANXIETY AND FAITH

*Toward Resolving Anxiety in Christian Community*

BY CHARLES R. STINNETTE, JR.

Foreword by David R. Hunter



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## FOREWORD

It is no easy undertaking to write a responsible book on the emotional unrest of our time and the resources of the Christian religion. Few writers should attempt it, for very few are capable of treating anxiety and religion without oversimplifying the one and corrupting the other. **ANXIETY AND FAITH** is a notable exception, having been written by a man whose professional life is firmly rooted in both disciplines.

The alacrity with which the usual popular writer in the psychological field diagnoses human difficulty and prescribes for it is a phenomenon of our time surpassed only by our incredible readiness to accept such advice. The recommendation usually boils down to a plea for an act of the will to be performed by the one who is in need, a plea that places the person at the mercy of his own will. In most human situations nothing could be more threatening or more inclined to aggravate the initial difficulty. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, that we seem so receptive to such advice.

Both psychology well grounded in laboratory exploration and theology which is rooted in Christian revelation have something to say to this twofold phenomenon which needs to be heard, albeit the two observations are quite different. What we know and acknowledge about man and what we believe or do not believe about God are determining factors both in the behaviour of the too hasty and superficial diagnostician and in the gullible and hungry receptiveness of the general public—ourselves.

When one says that the proper study of mankind is man,

this wise observation should be balanced with the assertion that the necessary companion of mankind in this study is God and man. If this claim is confusing, it could conceivably be attributable to the basis of the statement in the fundamental nature of God and man. Dr. Stinnette has provided us with a remarkably lucid treatment of this deepest of our needs, a need which can be found in the lives of every one of us.

This book will be helpful, first of all, to priest and minister, and to all who permit themselves to be used as agents in the cure of souls, clergy and laity alike. It will be a source of revealing insight to any teacher who conceives his task as primarily that of enabling the rich resources of our heritage to change and improve the life of the learner now. To the man or woman caught up in the travail of an anxiety neurosis this book will probably speak no more effectively than any other modern work, but at least it will not lead him down a road of delusion which can end only in despair. To the discerning layman who is capable of staying with a book which deals vividly with reality and refuses to offer any easy and alluring escape, **ANXIETY AND FAITH** can provide direction and Christian learning in the best tradition of all that is sound in modern psychology and creedal Christianity.

DAVID R. HUNTER

## PREFACE

Modern man knows anguish of soul in troubled dreams and in the pain of anxiety. There is a tyranny of despair and separation which is too familiar to every one of us. It is a wall of fear, a weight of guilt, and a consuming anger. What is its meaning? How shall we be delivered from its power? In what follows we propose to explore some of the answers to these questions. But no answer can remove the threat of anxiety. It must be faced. Within the Christian community it is possible in moments of faith and love not to banish anxiety, but to live beyond its power.

The interpretation of anxiety has played a crucial role in modern psychology and theology. Freud regarded it as "a nodal point," having significance for many other areas. Indeed anxiety, like freedom, points beyond clinical descriptions to a definition of man. It implies a spiritual capacity which thirsts for meaning. It is here in the total view of man—in the inferences drawn from the fact of anxiety—that psychology and religion must finally settle their differences.

Psychotherapy moves in the direction of man's recovery of himself through communication and human helpfulness. Progress in this comes only after much self-searching. The honest self-examination by modern man in therapy contrasts sharply with some "easy solutions" that glibly bear the name "Christian." Really to be searched and tried by God is a different matter. It is to know that there is no hiding place either in hell *or in heaven*. There is no wide gate nor easy way, but rather a narrow and hard path that leads to life beyond anxiety. It is a broken spirit and a contrite heart

which prepares man to walk that second mile from his own anxious ways to God's mercy and love.

Here is our thesis: Man alone cannot resolve anxiety. He needs others. He needs community. Even more, he needs the kind of community which is sustained by a more than human love. Too many of us have the impression that we may compel the gifts of faith by heroic but individual efforts. If we would have the fruits of the spirit, we must be willing to enter the community of the spirit. And for that gift no man cometh to the Father except by faith. In loneliness and separation men are forever strangers to one another, forever aliens so long as they try to create community out of their own stubborn hearts. But community comes as a gift of God. It comes only in faith. It comes when anxious fears are caught up in the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

I take this opportunity to express my indebtedness to Professors Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, and Horace Friess, of Union Seminary and Columbia University in New York City, who encouraged my study in this field. I am also more than grateful for the help of my beloved friend, now deceased, Professor David Roberts. They planted and I have tended—but the weeds are my responsibility! I have been fortunate in finding sympathetic interest, as well as sound discipline, at the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry in New York. Also I am indebted to many parishioners and colleagues, particularly to the Reverend Canon Theodore O. Wedel and to the good people who listened with patience when this material was given as a lecture series to "The Christianity and Modern Man" forum at the Washington Cathedral. Also, I owe a debt of gratitude to my wife, whose patient reading removed many, though not all, flaws in the text. Finally, I am thankful to the Reverend Dr. David R. Hunter for writing the Foreword and to Margaret Lockwood, who has prepared the manuscript for publication.

This book is not intended as a substitute for self-searching—either in prayer or in explicit therapy. It is intended to expose some of the “dead end” ways we choose under the threat of anxiety. “Perplexed, but not driven to despair,” the Christian may yet be enabled to endure his anxiety—by sharing it in the community of faith and thus come again to the confidence of the Psalmist:

I sought the Lord and He answered me,  
And delivered me from all my fears (Psalm 34:4).

CHARLES R. STINNETTE, JR.



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## *Anxiety and Faith*

O Holy Spirit, through whom the walls of loneliness are shattered and our community in faith is made manifest, clothe us with the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Thou hast gathered us together out of our solitary ways. Thou dost give beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning. So strengthen us with faith for anxiety that we may stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free.

(Based on Isaiah 61:1-3 and  
Galatians 5:1)



***Part I***

**MAN'S EFFORT TO  
UNDERSTAND ANXIETY**



## ANXIETY AND THE WHOLE MAN

When Hamlet declares that conscience makes cowards of us all, he could be voicing a cherished conviction of this age. For modern man is troubled. And his inner turmoil he expresses in the distorted patterns of his life. He seems in many ways broken and spent before his time. In one instance he is a man, driven and twisted by a debilitating hostility; in another he is deformed and immobilized by guilt feelings. Or she is a woman whose inner chaos drives her to seek help, but whose panic prevents her facing her real problem. They are all cowards. Yet they are also the ordinary people of this moment in history, of whom Auden speaks in his aptly entitled *The Age of Anxiety*, as

. . . phantoms who try  
through much drink by magic to restore  
the primitive pact with pure feeling.<sup>1</sup>

What is anxiety? Poet, philosopher, and clinician have struggled to give an adequate description of this night of man's soul. Yet to modern psychiatry belongs the distinction of having the eyes and the ears which have recorded most clearly the picture of anxiety. The condition is one that has

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Auden, *The Age of Anxiety* (New York: Random House, 1947), p. 10. Used by permission of the publisher.

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always been a part of man's experience; and it remains. "In the world," said Christ, "you have tribulation" (John 16:33). The German Bible uses here the word *angst*, the root of which lies embedded in our word *anxiety*. The reference suggests that the same human experience which has been of great concern to modern psychiatry and theology is common to man as man.

To answer the question, What is anxiety?, we must explore some of the current theories of its origin that have been put forward in psychiatry and theology. While we must keep in mind that these two disciplines approach the problem quite differently, we can, nevertheless, establish correlations between the two. On the deeper level, the question drives us beyond those easy and pat remedies for anxiety which sometimes bear the description "Christian." The convinced Christian knows that the answer to the problem of anxiety comes only with the courage to face its contradictory aspects—guilt and hostility. In terms of faith this means waiting, waiting with self-searching before the God of our salvation.

An immediate hazard in the effort to deal with the problem before us is the broad and indefinite use of the term *anxiety*. It is used in theological writing to describe that feeling of *dread* and *fear* which man experiences in the possibility of his separation from God. The same term is used in clinical medicine to indicate the experience of stress that accompanies emotional disturbance and a host of bodily disorders. We shall use the term *anxiety* in the sense conveyed by its German correlative, *angst*, which referred originally to a strait or a narrow passage, such as would restrict breathing. It should be added that anxiety, as an anonymous and "free floating" threat to his existence, is experienced by man in his totality. For anxiety, as distinguished from fear, is that condition which fails to discern its object, whereas fear is directly related to its object. Karen Horney makes this clear distinction:

Fear and anxiety are both proportionate reactions to danger, but in the case of fear the danger is a transparent, objective one and in the case of anxiety it is hidden and subjective.<sup>2</sup>

Hence a postman who avoids a particular dog for quite understandable reasons may be said to fear, for the object, in this instance, is clear. But a man in whom the very sight of any dog arouses violent feelings and a desire to run away is in the grip of anxiety. The sight of a dog—any dog—is enough to set in motion seemingly unfounded and unmanageable anxiety.

As we shall see later, much of the emphasis of psychotherapy is directed toward the goal of uncovering and evaluating the real and deeply buried object of anxiety. This is also a major task of Christian theology. To be sure, the question, Why are we anxious?, has become, in this day of great fear, a popular subject both for tabletalk and for community discussion. When the members of a church discussion group were asked recently to list the *manifestations* and the *causes* of anxiety in our daily life, their response demonstrated the difficulty of matching manifestation with cause. Some of the manifestations were: indecisiveness, escapism, busyness, dissatisfaction, impatience, meaninglessness, desire to be liked, shallowness, and a frantic grasping for religious answers! The causes given were not so numerous: possible war, insecurity, loneliness, guilt, death, and competitiveness. These people reveal in their answers the deep furrow anxiety has ploughed through modern life. They also remind us of our ineffectiveness before its threat.

#### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WHOLENESS

"But, Chaplain, my arms will not obey when my head says 'stop'!" The speaker was a young and attractive ser-

<sup>2</sup> Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality in Our Time* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1937), pp. 43-44.

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geant in an overseas army hospital. When brought to the hospital, he was suffering from a gross tremor in both arms. He felt quite bewildered by his continued symptoms, and he insisted with a smile that he had "no problems, no worries." He was the only son of a father incapacitated by tuberculosis and of an "overworked" mother. Like most other civilian soldiers, he looked forward to the day when he could go home. But the genuineness of his symptoms was unquestionable. Since several interviews revealed no conscious conflicts and since time and limited facilities precluded longer treatment, the psychiatrist decided to administer a hypnotic drug and to question the patient during the period of hypnosis. (Narcosynthesis was widely used in brief therapy during the war.) The sergeant was eager to cooperate in this. During the first narcosynthesis the patient revealed that he had known a man who was permanently afflicted with tremor. After great agitation, a second narcosynthesis brought forth the fact that he was very much worried about his mother, who was having to manage a huge ranch without the necessary help. The sergeant feared that his mother's health would be permanently damaged. He had repressed this fear, as well as his desire to do something about it, because he "did not wish to ask for special favors."

A day later the sergeant presented quite a different picture in interview. He was no longer smiling, but the tremor was gone. He was worried and spoke painfully of the cause of his worry. The only physical symptom now, apart from his general appearance, was "a slight heartburn." He was now "facing the facts," which, he seemed to realize, was the cost of the removal of the tremor. With the assistance of the Red Cross, the sergeant was returned home on a "dependency discharge" a few days later.

The case of this sergeant vividly demonstrates that unity of mind and body that has regained wide acceptance in modern thinking. Although he was unaware of the cause

of his symptoms, they nevertheless expressed a matter of great concern to him. While the sergeant "forgot" his concern, his body "remembered." That man in his functioning is an indivisible unit, is a working axiom in the field of human understanding today. Franz Alexander, in a research paper on psychosomatic medicine, points to this process by which anxious concerns get transformed into bodily manifestations (hysterical conversion) as an illustration, *in fact*, of the unity of mind and body. Many ulcer sufferers have noticed that a period of strain coincides with a flare-up in pain. The implication is clear: man is a psychosomatic whole. Wear and tear of any kind affects the whole man.

#### **WHY DOES SEPARATION OCCUR?**

It is a striking fact that in most primitive cultures the functions of priest and physician are frequently combined. It is as if man knew in the innermost recesses of his being that neither his spiritual life nor his bodily needs can be isolated and ignored. It is unfortunately true, however, that the history of medicine has been the record of a persistent growing apart of the spiritual and physical aspects of man's life, as the gap widened between priest and physician. This tendency to fragment man is due to many factors, such as philosophical opinions that operate on the assumption that the only real world is the world of observable phenomena, as well as to the nature of the experimental method that science develops as a genuine tool. The separation of priest and physician may be further understood as an inevitable component of the struggle for freedom by medical science against the authoritarian power of the Church. For these and other reasons the isolation and anxiety of man have been emphasized by therapies that have dealt too long with only a part of the whole man. The fact that both scientific and theological thinking have today turned again to the concept of wholeness does not remove immediately the problems that years of isolation and separation have left behind.

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It is important to keep in mind that biblical man is an indivisible unity. The Bible does not split man into component parts. That man is, that he is a *living soul*, carries with it the assumption that his personality is whole. The Old Testament scholars are agreed that dualism has no application to Hebrew psychology and that each bodily function, be it *nephesh* (breath) or the heart, is but a different aspect of the unity of personality. The expression of this wholeness is contained in the pivotal commandment in Deuteronomy (6:5): ". . . and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."<sup>3</sup> As in obedience to the commandment, so in sin also, man's unity within himself, as well as his solidarity with his people, is maintained. Thus the prophet could exclaim:

Ah! sinful nation, guilt laden people . . . the whole head is ailing, and the whole heart is sick (Isaiah 1:4a and 5b, Goodspeed).

The New Testament is at one with the Old in this matter of man's unity. Greek dualism had little influence upon it. Man there is redeemed not merely by pious acts, but by responding as a whole person to Christ and by entering the community of the Holy Spirit, the Church. That new life is one of relationship: I-Thou. It speaks the language of faith, which is the language of wholes. And the Church in her Creeds is primarily concerned with a living affirmation of the whole man, "I believe in . . ." We shall focus upon the Christian view of wholeness in relation to anxiety in later chapters. Here we desire only to call attention to the wholeness of man in the biblical perspective.

The revolution that broke the medieval synthesis seriously challenged that ancient unity also. Disturbing forces

<sup>3</sup> Scriptural quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible (copyright 1946 and 1952).

Quotations from the Psalter, unless otherwise noted, are from the Book of Common Prayer.

had been at work for centuries before the storm broke, creating a growing tradition of philosophy and life in which mind and body were separated. While not all philosophy became dualistic, many philosophers moved in that direction in their effort to stand off and view life in a passive, spectatorial manner. Behind their attempt was the assumption that there is in man a separate entity, mind or soul, which observes and records, but which is not involved in the actual process of growth and change. Philosophically, modern man's fate was decided by that underlying assumption. It was an easy step thence to the view that the only real world is the physical world of observable phenomena. Secularism, a "this world only" view, was the dark horse of the Enlightenment. Despite their personal concern with spiritual matters, Galileo and Descartes were the fathers of modern materialism by virtue of the fact that they relegated man's spirit to a place of relative unimportance. Both Locke and Kant struggled with the problem, only to discover an impassable gulf between the observing mind and the world described by science. This view, which tries to restrict all knowledge to the mathematics derived from observable phenomena, still persists in some circles to challenge the unity of man that psychosomatic study has recovered.

#### TOWARD RECOVERED UNITY

The rise of biology as a science in the nineteenth century, with its view of all life as the product of interaction between environment and organism, opened the way for the rediscovery of man's unity. If he is more than a well-oiled machine that functions automatically, man's attitudes and motives must again enter the picture. The heart may have reasons that the mind does not know. Every view of man must take into consideration the fact that bodily life is not merely physical, nor is mental life merely psychic. The way has been opened again to see man as a whole, to see him as the biblical picture delineates him. "The eye is the lamp of

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the body," Christ has said. And by that light or by that darkness, as the case may be, the whole of man, both body and spirit, is known.

By contrast, the Victorian Age fixed a vast gulf between attitudes and behavior. Indeed, when motives got uncomfortably close to awareness, ladies resorted to the "polite faint," and gentlemen took a tighter reign on their discipline of repression. This was grist for a genius like Sigmund Freud! The view of man widely accepted today was formulated some years ago by John Dewey when, speaking before a medical society, he suggested that the old phrase, "A sound mind in a sound body," should be recast to read, "A sound human being in a sound human environment."

The psychology of wholeness still encounters difficulties within the medical profession. There are still some who say that "either the body is sick, or there is nothing wrong." But how can so prejudiced a view understand the problem of anxiety? The illness arises precisely in the area in which mind and body meet. We gather, however, that attitudes in medical circles have been changing since Gregory Zilboorg wrote: "Medicine had less differences with the medieval barbers who practiced surgery than it has today with psychiatry."<sup>4</sup>

A most puzzling question is, perhaps, why religious thinkers who hold the basic conviction that the unseen reality is operative in nature and supremely so in man, accepted the tragic partition of man into such divisions as spiritual and physical. Carried to its logical conclusions, such a view would certainly undermine the doctrine of the Incarnation and render the sacraments meaningless. This dichotomy was a serious pitfall for both medicine and religion. Its consequent destruction of man's unity led medicine into an extreme specialization that failed to treat the whole man; it also made religion irrelevant to the real world. As

<sup>4</sup> Gregory Zilboorg, *History of Medical Psychology* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1941), p. 521. Used by permission of the publisher.

early as the turn of the century, William James was warning, in *Varieties of Religious Experience*, that the "mind-cure" sects that were then spreading at a rapid pace throughout the world were man's spontaneous answer to his own sickness. When traditional religion failed to heal man in his depths, new sects arose to do the task. Despite the dominance of views that ignored a large area of man's being, new ways to express his wholeness in worship were found. Again, wisdom in the heart of man goes her way, ignoring the artificial barriers that man constructs. For, what is planted deep in the soul of man wills to come alive—"deep calls to deep." Its voice will be heard!

This brief excursion into the psychology of wholeness should give emphasis to the place of anxiety in man's understanding of himself. Anxiety dwells in man's spirit, and it speaks through his every motion. Today it expresses itself in a headache, tomorrow in a paralyzing fear. It will not "stay put," precisely because man is not fixed. He is a creature brought to life by the breath of God. The picture of anxiety is one of constant motion, just as life is motion—and decision! We turn now to a brief account of the effort of psychiatry to describe and interpret that picture.

#### UNCONSCIOUS MOTIVATION IN ANXIETY

Even before Freud, men of imagination in science and in literature had come to the conclusion that hysterical symptoms have meaning. It is Freud's merit that he organized his observations around the basic postulate that psychic processes are strictly determined and that thoughts, feelings, and actions are motivated by unconscious emotional forces. The significant discovery that motives exist outside of awareness and that they play an important role in human behavior is one of his lasting contributions. The earliest description of psychoanalysis at work is to be found in that famous collection of *Case Studies in Hysteria*, which Freud wrote in collaboration with Joseph Breuer. In the

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cases both of Anna O. and Lucy R. unconscious factors were operative in the symptoms presented, and it was found that these submerged factors could only be uncovered by the circuitous route of much talk and a process of inquiry that one patient described as "chimney sweeping" and a "talking cure." It is interesting to note that, in this early work, the authors were sensitive to the effects of the conditions of life and of the patients' tendencies toward phantasy, factors which were destined to play important roles in the later development of psychoanalysis.

In his later writings Freud developed the concept of the unconscious and demonstrated its manifestation in dream, phantasy, and the patient's analysis of his errors. Indeed, the technique of *free association*, by which the patient progressively reveals the contents of his unconscious life, became a standard procedure in psychotherapy. This concept of the unconscious has come to be widely used in understanding human behavior, not only in psychology, but also in religion, anthropology, ethics, and in other fields.

### EARLIER INFLUENCES

Another important discovery by Freud which we must have in mind as we describe anxiety is that earlier influences continue to be operative in a person's later life, but in ways that have been well hidden from consciousness. Childhood patterns of reaction are active in adult life. And the rejected child is likely to continue to feel and act rejected as an adult. Indeed, Freud's early efforts to explain anxiety phobias and obsessions resulted in his conclusion that they are "defensive reactions" which protect the individual from bearing in his conscious mind underlying self-reproaches and intolerable ideas.<sup>5</sup> The continued influence of infantile reac-

<sup>5</sup> Sigmund Freud, "The Defense of Neuro-Psychosis," in *Collected Papers* (London: The International Psycho-Analytical Library), Vol. I, CH. IV. All quotations from the *Collected Papers* are used by permission of the publisher.

tions and their significance in personality development has provided the point of departure for dynamic psychology, a psychology that goes beyond Freud. Harry Stack Sullivan, for example, holds that the self is made up of "reflected appraisals" and that those restraints on the child's freedom necessary for his socialization bring about the evolution of "self-dynamism" with its dissociated, as well as conscious, aspects in the adult personality. Erich Fromm, however, holds a view of personality that is basically conceived in terms of the specific kind of relatedness that the individual bears toward the world rather than in terms of his satisfaction of specific instincts, as did Freud. Hence, in Fromm's view, this *relatedness* is established in the child's relations to parental figures, who may all too frequently frighten and confuse the child by their methods until he is forced to deny his own feelings. Thus Fromm writes: "The child starts with giving up the expression of his feeling and eventually gives up the very feeling itself."<sup>6</sup> Such sacrifices are not made without cost, and as we shall later see, the cost is the hostility and anxiety of later life.

#### DESCRIPTIONS OF ANXIETY

For the description of anxiety, we must begin with the clinical picture which Freud set forth in his early monograph, *The Anxiety Neurosis* (1894). It appears that in Freud's mind there was from the beginning some correlation between the constricting and inhibiting experiences of anxiety, and the feeling associated with the narrow passage through which the child passes in birth. But it was not until much later that Freud interpreted anxiety as a symbolic reproduction of the trauma of birth, the experience which becomes the prototype of all occasions when life is endangered. In an early paper on anxiety-neurosis, Freud described it

<sup>6</sup> Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1941), p. 242. Used by permission of the publisher.

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clinically as a condition displaying “general irritability” and “anxious expectation” grouped around the central symptom of “morbid anxiety.” Freud regarded the element of anxious expectation as an unfailing component. He wrote:

We may perhaps say that there is here a *quantum of anxiety in a free floating condition*, which in any state of expectation controls the selection of ideas, and is ever ready to attach itself to any suitable ideational content.<sup>7</sup>

The important fact in this clinical picture is that anxiety displays a “free floating” character and thus may appear in many forms. Freud recognized and listed more than a dozen types of anxiety-attack; but we can today multiply that list many times. In the case, cited earlier, of the sergeant, anxiety was expressed through gross tremor. But in most cases it appears in less dramatic, although equally persistent, forms. In the reports of those listing their own symptoms, these elements always seem to be present: a feeling of indefinite, objectless fear that always threatens to overcome them, a sense of danger out of all proportion to the actual situation at hand, and a heartbreaking inability to discover the cause of and remedy for it in effective action. And one may feel all these things under the stimulus of a minor crisis or even without a crisis.

For the most part, anxiety operates to restrict living. As Lavinia puts it, in T. S. Eliot’s *The Cocktail Party*, “Always on the verge of some wonderful experience and it never happened.” A kind of pervasive anxiety grips many people today. For them life never comes off. Anticipation is never fulfilled in experience. As time goes by, they no longer sense even anticipation. They shuffle through a macabre dance of living that is not living and are ever haunted by a vague threat that can never be identified.

<sup>7</sup> Freud, *Collected Papers*, I, 80. Used by permission of the publisher.

### INTERPRETATIONS OF ANXIETY

It has been said that one of the greatest contributions of Freud to the study of human behavior is that he taught men how to observe. He equipped men, so to speak, with the eyes and the ears to record the clinical picture of anxiety. He trained them to see below the surface of the physical and to hear unspoken, but significant, words. In the language of the spirit, we may say that Freud was able to see, as few men have seen, the *signs* that point to the mighty struggle that goes on within the soul of man. The history of Freud's successive interpretations of anxiety is the history of the psychoanalytic movement for nearly fifty years. In some respects it is not unlike the history of theological development in religious thought, in that while it is packed with disputes and variant schools, it is gaining all the while vast experience with which to meet the problems of human behavior. For our purposes we need only briefly indicate the main interpretations that have influenced recent thinking about anxiety.

In his first description of anxiety, Freud seems to have accepted Breuer's thesis that "hysterical patients suffer principally from reminiscences."<sup>8</sup> Two years later, in 1894, Freud attempted on his own to explain the origin of phobias and obsessions as defenses against an unbearable idea that had been repressed.<sup>9</sup> But in 1896, he concluded that "obsessions are always reproaches re-emerging in a transmuted form under repression, reproaches which invariably relate to a sexual deed performed with pleasure in childhood."<sup>10</sup> Thus Freud moved in the direction of the formulation of his first view of anxiety. It is due, he said in effect, to the

<sup>8</sup> Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer, "On the Psychical Mechanisms of Hysterical Phenomena," *Collected Papers* (London: Hogarth Press), I, 29.

<sup>9</sup> Freud, "The Defense of Neuro-Psychosis," *ibid.*, I, 72.

<sup>10</sup> Freud, "Further Remarks on the Defense of Neuro-Psychosis," *ibid.*, I, 162.

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repression of impulses of a sexual nature which, when prevented from discharge, produce physical tension and are transformed into anxiety. Freud's statements concerning the evolution of anxiety are cast in language reminiscent of that of a physicist dealing with the law of conservation of energy. Anxiety originates in every instance automatically through a process of economy. It is due to "the deflection of somatic sexual excitation from the psychical field and . . . an abnormal use of it due to this deflection."<sup>11</sup> Men and women in forced or voluntary continence are living under conditions likely to produce anxiety.

Firm in his conviction that sex repression is at the base of anxiety, Freud developed his theory of *libido*, which he conceived as a force of "variable quantity" by which sexual processes and transformations could be measured. Libido, diverted by repression from its usual course, reappears in anxiety symptoms that are, in some measure, "surrogates" for the specific activity that would otherwise follow upon sexual excitation. Indeed, Freud regarded anxiety symptoms as symbols of the patient's misdirected sexual activity, and in his "General Remarks on Hysterical Attacks" (1909), he described hysterical attacks as "coitus-like." In *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, Freud elaborated upon the themes of sexual aberrations, infantile sexuality, and the transformations of puberty. There he rounded out his sex theory by marking off the child's developmental stages according to his sexual orientation: oral, anal-sadistic, or genital. Since we are only concerned with Freud's interpretation of the origin of anxiety as sexual, we need not consider more fully his theories of sex, except to note that the whole structure rests upon the assumption of a specific "libido instinct," present from the beginning of life.

It is important to note that although Freud regarded himself throughout his career as a natural scientist with no

<sup>11</sup> Freud, "Justification for Detaching from Neurasthenia a Particular Syndrome: The Anxiety Neurosis," *ibid.*, I, 97.

message for mankind, his respect for his task and his unwillingness to refrain from saying unpopular things made him a prophet to his generation. In 1898, when he was receiving sharp and, in most cases, unjust criticism for his frank discussion of sex, he struck back in words packed with angry conviction:

The opposition of a generation of physicians who can no longer remember their own youth must be broken down, the pride of fathers who are unwilling to descend to the level of common humanity in the eyes of their children will have to be overcome, the unreasonable prudery of mothers who at present quite generally regard it as an incomprehensible and also undeserved stroke of fate that "just their children should be nervous," would have to be met.<sup>12</sup>

But Freud's view that in the psychic economy there is a simple and direct relation between sexual repression and anxiety still failed to explain many problems of human behavior. Freud was deeply disturbed by the fact that the hostility and aggression in the individual seemed to move inexorably into modern warfare. It seemed that collective man had chosen the way of mass suicide, and by the end of the First World War Freud began to revise his theory of anxiety. Two of his disciples, Jung and Adler, had already challenged some of his basic assumptions and had established new schools of psychology. One reason for Freud's revision of his early anxiety theory may lie in the fact that, although he had actively opposed all religious answers and had avoided anything which might suggest *a way of life*, he was forced by actual experience to realize that the depths of man's tragedy is more profound than the attribution of it to a "somatic demand" indicates. Gregory Zilboorg, in *Mind, Medicine and Man*, made an observation that Freud himself

<sup>12</sup> Freud, "Sexuality in the Actiology of the Neurosis," *ibid.*, I, 239. Used by permission of the publisher.

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later admitted; namely, that Freud's discoveries about human behavior were in fact the counterpart in dynamic psychology of the doctrine of original sin.

Specifically it was Freud's concern with hostility and aggression that led to the development of his second theory of anxiety. During the First World War he had opportunity to study extensively the relation of hostility and compulsive activity in war neurosis. His reflections and clinical experience brought him to the conclusion that to the instincts of hunger and sex an "aggressive instinct" must be added. In Freud's view this aggressive instinct functions to protect the individual from a deeply buried tendency toward self-destruction. Indeed, Freud maintained that a tendency toward self-destruction, or a "death instinct," is never absent in any vital human experience. In order to survive, man counters his own self-destructive impulses with those of hostility and aggression which, despite social curbs, explode in individual and social reactions. Freud writes:

The limitation of aggression is the first and perhaps the hardest sacrifice which society demands from the individual. The setting up of the super-ego, which makes the dangerous aggressive impulses its own, is like introducing a garrison into a province that is on the brink of rebellion.<sup>13</sup>

Along with adding the assumption of the death instinct, Freud stressed in his revised interpretation the indefinite and pervasive character of anxiety. He now interpreted anxiety as the fear of those impulses, the discovery of which would involve the subject in external danger. The recognition of hostility (this latter Freud regarded as the counter of the death instinct) constitutes for the subject such a danger, since it immediately raises the possibility of counter-attack by one's fellows. Thus the real object of anxiety re-

<sup>13</sup> Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1933), p. 151. Used by permission of the publisher.

mains unknown to the individual since this object is the hostility and the aggressive impulses which would render him helpless before the power of society, were they to come into consciousness. The primal experience behind these impulses, in Freud's view, is the "remembered and anticipated situation of helplessness," the prototype of which is the helplessness of the infant entirely dependent upon his parents. Accordingly, the adult experience of anxiety recapitulates the trauma of birth and is accompanied by the same pain and helplessness.

In his second theory of anxiety Freud did not give up his view of the instinctive origin of anxiety, inasmuch as he continued to postulate a death instinct at the base of life. But he was forced to revise his view of the simple mechanical relation of sex repression to anxiety and to take into account the person's primal experience and relations. Whereas for Freud the interpersonal factors served simply as vehicles for the expression of instinctual drives, other observers have regarded them as important in the origin of anxiety itself.

An important question remains unanswered in Freud: Why does the anxious adult in his relation to other people continue to act as if he were still in the infantile state of helplessness? The findings of cultural anthropologists have suggested a part of the answer to this question. By living in the midst of other cultures and by observing the infinite ways in which every culture shapes and forms the character of its people, these anthropologists have directed our interest to the forces that mold man in our civilization. Ruth Benedict, for example, in *Patterns of Culture*, draws attention to the fact that every culture has a word for "heathen" or "outsider"; and it usually identifies its own implicit attitudes as the attitudes of *man*. It follows that every culture fashions the individual personality in terms of its own values, its own motif, and its own norm. Thus, if we are to understand why the adult continues to act and feel as a helpless child, we must see him not only as an individual with instinctual ego

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needs, but as a person whose attitudes have been fashioned by the culture in which he is reared. That fashioning impresses upon the infant the prevailing attitudes, whether of anxiety or of calmness and trust, that surround him while he is brought into the world, fed, handled, taught, punished, and rewarded. In short, these prevailing attitudes will reflect, through infinite contacts, the experience of that culture in love and tenderness, as well as in anxiety, hostility, and guilt, all of which the individual has made his own by empathy. It is obvious that *this* culture, which is continuous with Freud's, leaves modern man feeling helpless, and thus anxious. He is "a stranger and afraid" in a world he "never made." This appreciation of the profound influence of culture on the inner springs of man's life provides the basis for a deeper view of man, as well as of his society and of his faith community.

Psychiatrists have since developed the dynamic interpretation, beyond Freud's, to include the interpersonal factor as a present reality in neurosis and the cultural factor as an influencing agent. Karen Horney has suggested that Freud's explanation of anxiety as the repetition of an original anxiety accompanying the birth experience is an instance of his mechanical way of thinking; and she holds that with the passing of the assumption that instinctual drives modified only by environment are at the base of anxiety, the way is open to study "life conditions" as its cause. Horney would reject the assumption that psychoanalysis has "depth" only if it establishes a mechanical connection with infantile drives. While admitting the importance of unconscious motivations in repressed strivings, feelings and fears, Horney, in *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*, emphasizes the present role of these repressed strivings in the actual and present life conditions of the patient. She also regards anxiety as an emotional response to danger which, unlike fear, is diffuse and indefinite; but in her view the danger lies in the core of the personality which has been shaped by the person's living

conditions, by the structure of his personality, and by his values in terms of love, work, convictions, possessions, and reputation. In *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (which, perhaps not without significance for the major thesis, I find myself at times twisting into "the neurotic culture in our personality"!), Horney concludes that anxiety arises "in general not so much from a fear of our impulses as from fear of our repressed impulses."<sup>14</sup>

While acknowledging his debt to Freud on many occasions, Fromm puts forward the more recent dynamic interpretation of personality structure in contrast to the older biological and mechanical views. Whereas the Freudian view regards man as existing in a closed world with more or less fixed relations in terms of basic instincts, Fromm regards personality structure as the result of the kind of "relatedness" which the individual establishes with regard to himself, to others, and to his world. Fromm would use the early formulations and clinical observations of Freud, but not his interpretations.

Fromm's main thesis is that, as man emerges from a primitive oneness with the tribe and nature and as he gains his freedom, he is faced with the necessity of uniting with his fellows and the world on a higher level in spontaneous love and productive work. The alternative to this is the loss of his freedom and integrity, since anxiety accompanies his newly won "*freedom from*" bondage and drives him relentlessly on either to give up that unbearable freedom or to realize his "*freedom to*" achieve individuality. In a striking passage, Fromm mentions the biblical myth of man's expulsion from paradise as representing the fundamental relation between man and freedom:

He (the free Adam) is alone and free, yet powerless and afraid. The newly won freedom appears as a curse;

<sup>14</sup> Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), p. 75.

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he is free from the sweet bondage of paradise, but he is not free to govern himself, to realize his individuality.<sup>15</sup>

Hence paradise lost cannot be regained, but in his "freedom to" actualize his capacities for self-realization, man is challenged by a vision more satisfying than a return to paradise.

As might be expected, Fromm presupposes a humanistic ethic as the basis for man's striving for self-realization. His writings are packed with a zeal reminiscent of the prophets of Israel. His analysis of the lack of social wholeness and of the manifold ways in which man attempts to escape his freedom is based upon a profound understanding of the condition of modern man. Even though the picture is dark, Fromm believes man can correct it for himself. He regards anxiety as a culturally determined product that exists in almost direct proportion to the degree of "unlived life." Man's health lies in the direction of greater expression of selfhood.

Harry Stack Sullivan, however, has put *interpersonal relations* at the very heart of his interpretation of psychiatry. For Sullivan, anxiety has its origins in the interpersonal relations through which one has come to be a person—interpersonal relations which date from the moment of birth. Sullivan makes much of the *distortion* that the child suffers early in life.<sup>16</sup> This distortion comes from two sources: the child's own helplessness and the unhealthy attitudes of parental figures, primarily of the mother. And throughout life it continues to interfere with awareness, to block emotions, and to limit the enjoyment of living. Sullivan points to

<sup>15</sup> Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, pp. 34-35. Used by permission of the publisher.

<sup>16</sup> Harry Stack Sullivan, *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1953).

Sullivan uses the term *parataxic distortion* to describe the initial discrimination between the self and the world that comes about through the child's early experience in interpersonal relations. From that *parataxic distortion* is built up the "vast development of actions, thoughts, foresights, etc., which are calculated to protect one from a feeling of insecurity and helplessness . . ."

the enormous role that anxiety plays in modern life, as evidenced by the prevalence of inefficient work and play and by the elaborate obsessional patterns and rituals. But Sullivan also holds that even as man becomes anxious in the area of his relation to other people, so also his health is to be regained through emotionally satisfying and re-creating interpersonal relations. Such a view of illness and health, including as it does the "biology and pathology of interpersonal relations," has proved to be a meeting ground not only for differing approaches within psychiatry, but also for as widely divergent disciplines as theology, law, and education.

Sullivan points out that the infant is born in too immature a state to live by its own "functional activity" and that in this helplessness the feeling of being "mothered" is his first vivid impression. It is here that anxiety has its origin, for by "empathetic observation" the child reflects the appraisal of his mother. If she is disapproving, even silently so, her feelings are communicated by empathy to the child. Anxiety results and, all too often, is luxuriantly reinforced by life experience. In Sullivan's view anxiety is a tool, like the infant's cry or the child's constipation, that keeps the individual from becoming aware of his intolerable loss of self esteem. It gradually restricts personal awareness in a wide area, and as a result many impulses, desires, and needs come to exist dissociated from the self. If along the way in infancy, childhood, or pre-adolescence a good relation with a nurse, a teacher, or a parental figure has been established, it is likely that anxiety will be sharply reduced. But tragically enough, many people never reach the stage of maturity with the capacity to love and to be loved, because a reflected low respect for the self has long since paralyzed their growth.

It can be seen from this brief survey of recent interpretations of anxiety that Freudianism has been modified to take into account the cultural and interpersonal factors.

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Other writers, like Rollo May in *The Problem of Anxiety*, have brought together these varying interpretations, but more with reference to the clinical picture than to the religious meaning. This glimpse of the effort of psychiatry to understand anxiety must now be placed against the broader canvas of man's effort to see his total life in faith.

### S U M M A R Y

In this chapter we have attempted to describe anxiety and to cover some of the important interpretations of its origin and social manifestations. Perhaps the most outstanding characteristic of anxiety is the helplessness that it inflicts upon the individual. He is at the mercy of a driving force which robs life of satisfaction and fulfillment. In this respect anxiety may be compared to panic reactions, which are characterized by multiple, disorganized, and meaningless responses. Anxiety mechanisms likewise display this ineffective and disoriented character. A panic-stricken person is usually immobilized before the real object of danger, and the anxiety-ridden person cannot come to deal with the real cause of his condition. Anxiety is a slow, but persistent, terror with an underside of self-rejection and hostility that is only vaguely indicated by the title of Menninger's book, *Man Against Himself*.

As a factor in social conditions, anxiety tends to perpetuate itself through the prevailing attitudes that shape the individual's development in family and community. Here is a disturbed Negro soldier from the South, who aroused his fellows in the night with the scream, "Don't get the wrong idea! Don't get the wrong ideal" When asked about the outburst, the soldier said that he had dreamed he was pursued by "doctors in white coats." He added that they were the same "white doctors" to whom he had confessed his encounter with a white French prostitute. His nightmare was indicative of a deep anxiety that eventually forced his hospitalization. No doubt, individual

factors played their part in this man's illness, but, in addition, the cultural factor with its rigid and impassable gulf between Negro and white also took its toll. Indeed, existence itself has taken on the character of anxiety for this person. Who can say whether therapy, or adjustment, or anything short of the saving grace of God will heal this wound?

The prevalence of anxiety and its deeply rooted character suggest that the problem will not be solved *in toto* by any action designed simply to adjust or even to re-educate man. Anxiety is intimately associated with the condition of man's existence. Man must live with it, and through it, in faith. Social action and techniques of therapy will relieve specific situations and reduce his vulnerability to it, but anxiety remains a problem as long as man remains man, and not a tree. Let Job make his witness:

For the thing that I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me (Job 3:25).

## *Chapter Two .*

# IN THE WORLD . . . ANXIETY

In the world you have tribulation . . .

—John 16:33

These words of Christ from the Fourth Gospel suggest the indigenous character of anxiety in existence. For at the very heart of life is the necessity of accepting its conditions. Many of us would defer that decision until we could be sure of our answer. Meanwhile we drift through the night of this life like a watchman making his rounds, that journey paced with a clock and the whole meaning too often consisting of having "punched in" at certain stations! But that aimlessness is as much an expression of our rejection of life as would be our shouting with Job:

I loathe my life . . .

Let me alone, for my days are a breath (Job 7:16).

The decision which life forces upon us—whether at heart to accept or to reject its conditions—always involves anxiety. What is more, it is a decision that can never be regarded as settled. Whether we affirm life or choose death in the midst of living, the matter is not finally decided since the alternative continues to confront us. One never rids himself of that dilemma or its attendant anxiety. But the words of Christ suggest a way of living with this permanent crisis in unfailing confidence.

### **CREATIVE ANXIETY**

It is a mistake to talk of getting rid of anxiety. It may be reduced by psychotherapy, and it is partially resolved

in Christian faith and community. There is no necessary antagonism between the two ways of healing. One is an instrument for emotional re-education; the other is a way of life in contact with the Source of all healing. Conflict between religion and psychiatry may be found in the inferences drawn from human experience, but it need not occur in the area of therapy and pastoral care. The concern with *how* and *what* in psychiatry does not always produce a unified answer as to *why*. This the conflicting philosophies of psychiatry obviously preclude.

Yet even when these inferences seem hostile to religion, we cannot overlook the wealth of insight concerning man's health that this discipline furnishes us. Thus we may disagree sharply with a commonly held opinion in psychiatry, such as the assumption that anxiety is eradicable, without drawing the conclusion that those who hold this view have nothing to offer man in the task of living through anxiety. On the other hand, some psychiatrists regard anxiety as always "restrictive," an interference with life. Yet it does not follow that the task of developing a free and spontaneous self is without anxiety.

The ordinary and universal experience of anxiety suggests that it is unavoidable in life—even necessary. Indeed, our great concern in dealing with the pathology of anxiety seems to have blinded us to its positive role. And psychiatry seems to have ignored that side of the experience largely because of its analytic concern with neurotic problems. This situation may be regarded as temporary, for the insights of psychoanalysis are being rapidly assimilated in other fields. For instance, concern with moral value may be a source of genuine and creative anxiety for man. Some psychiatrists, like Fromm and Horney, have gone beyond the traditional avoidance of this area in psychoanalysis. They have observed that a lack of moral concern adds to the "scatteredness" and "blindness" of modern life.

Anxiety is a part of man's living and deciding. No

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great work of imaginative art has ever come into being without it. As a creative force, it has sparked the souls of saints and poets throughout the ages and is associated with the most profound expressions of the human spirit. But when we speak of creative anxiety, we have in mind something quite different from the pathological anxiety that robs life of its zest and either immobilizes or seriously cripples the functioning of those who experience it. We have in mind an experience like St. Paul's conversion, the "psychotic episode" as some would have it, that broke the bonds of his own exclusiveness and made him brother to "Jew and Greek, bond and free." John Donne struggled to express an experience closely akin to creative anxiety when he wrote of holding back his tears that he

Might in this holy discontent,  
Mourn with some fruit . . . ,

a fruit which grows out of the knowledge that

In mine idolatry what showers of  
rain mine eyes did waste?

### SOME DISTINCTIONS

But together with its creative role as a spur to man's spirit, anxiety plays the negative role of restricting and reducing man's self-realization. The very devices that psychiatry has developed to uncover neurotic anxiety, such as the analysis of the unconscious areas of personality and the critical examination of the subtle influences of life conditions, are also effective ways of viewing the less dramatic, but inevitable, role that anxiety plays in all existence. Almost half a century before Freud, Søren Kierkegaard became concerned with and exposed the unconscious role of "anxious dread" even in the hidden recesses of man's happiness. With consummate skill he laid bare the "infinitely comic" devices that man utilizes to hide his real despair.

This very hidden quality of anxiety explains its per-

vasiveness and constitutes a hazard in making a distinction between the anxiety common to all human living and that which bears neurotic significance. The individual who carries "anxious dread" as the "gnawing secret" of his life is unlikely to seek the help of a psychiatrist. What is more, he will not come to grips with the ultimate meaning of his life. Although his sickness is shrouded and deeply buried within him, he does not escape the consequences of anxiety in his living. That ultimate anxiety takes its toll, as surely as any neurotic impoverishment.

For purposes of this discussion we should now characterize the three functional types of anxiety.

*Primary anxiety*, or the *anxiety of existence*, is that condition of shock that man always experiences on learning, as Pascal put it, "that he is something and that he is not everything." This anxiety accompanies freedom and, in actuality, is transformed into one of the other manifestations.

*Sinful anxiety* is the condition that persists when, under the threat of primal anxiety, man succumbs to the temptation to separate himself from God and experiences, as a result, both loss of freedom and innocence, and guilt under the judgment of God. Operatively, in the unconscious, it attempts to intensify its control and to hide its real object.

*Neurotic anxiety* is that condition that always bears a reference to a distortion in some basic interpersonal relation. It functions operatively outside consciousness through feelings of guilt and hostility, and it attempts by manipulative control to continue the original distortion.

It is obvious that these distinctions between primary, sinful, and neurotic anxiety are possible only in a theoretical discussion. In actual life they are combined, and it would be a rash man who would attempt to separate the various strains. Obviously, some behavior problems are readily explained as having a basis in neurotic anxiety. Yet since every

man experiences primary anxiety, and every man sins, neurotic anxiety is more or less intensified by sinful anxiety. This does not mean that it is impossible to deal with the pathology of neurotic anxiety. But it does mean that in practice no absolute and final distinction can be made between sinful and neurotic anxiety. Hence the patient who constantly complains, "I can never be what they want me to be!", is more than likely suffering from the impossible claims laid upon him by others whose relationship to him has left this residual distortion. Nevertheless, that plea can become an effective screen, behind which the individual hides his own responsibility for what he does with his life. Hence, in this age of psychological sophistication, one learns quite early to substitute "conditioning" for personal accountability. There is profound insight in the cartoon which pictured a small boy saying airily to his father, who is reading an obviously unsatisfactory report card, "Well, Pop, what is it this time, heredity or environment?"

#### ANXIETY AND EXISTENCE

What does it mean when we say that anxiety is unavoidably involved in man's existence? Hedged in by physical limitations, illness, and eventual death, man is deeply impressed with the caprice and uncertainty of life. The fact that he is not satisfied with mere animal existence and yet is constantly reminded that his rational capacities are limited, means that man is uneasy in the deepest core of his being. The very awareness of self brings man to the realization of his powerlessness and of the uncertainty of his existence. For to know self-identity is to be acutely conscious of its limitations in that it is always threatened with the possibility of loss and requires painful decisions to maintain itself. Furthermore, it must constantly adjust to the Other. At every point decision and action meet judgment. And from that there is no escape, either in hell or in heaven!

Man's position is unique. His ambiguous nature is the source of both his creativity and his sin. It means that he is able to transcend himself in thought and to experience loving communion with his fellows, but it also means that he knows the bitterness of frustration and despair. Being a child of nature and spirit, he cannot reach integration simply by becoming either pure animal or pure angel. He must live. Even though tempted to deny his spiritual life or to get rid of his natural body, his satisfactions require both; and he is driven to seek unity not only within himself, but also with his fellows, and ultimately with the ground of existence.

His creative effort, however, is always fraught with danger and anxiety. Rejection and disappointment stand ready to frustrate him; and all too frequently, in fear lest they overcome him, he gives up the effort to achieve self-hood and "adjusts" in order to appease the unbearable anxiety that he feels. But psychiatry knows a great deal about such "adjustments" where anxiety is not resolved, but continues to influence man's life outside consciousness. The monotonous sameness, from door-stops to gin labels, that marks the successful man in middle class suburbia is but a thin disguise for the raging despair that has swallowed up selfhood in conformity. As Kierkegaard put it with telling accuracy throughout *The Sickness Unto Death*, worldliness is made up of successful men who are not themselves!

The fullest realization of selfhood is made impossible by anxiety. Yet man never forgets completely the desire for wholeness that self-realization involves. Otto Rank holds that man retains in memory, as a symbol of wholeness, the embryonic state in the mother's womb, where the individual felt himself to be an indivisible whole and, at the same time, to be inseparably related to a greater whole, the mother.<sup>1</sup> Outside the womb the individual strives for whole-

<sup>1</sup> Otto Rank, *Will Therapy and Truth and Reality* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), pp. 185 ff.

ness of personality as a substitute for the totality lost at birth; but now his drive to realize wholeness is beset with a "primal fear," which may appear as a fear of life or as a fear of death. Kierkegaard relentlessly traces this primal fear back to man's inescapable relation to God. He insists that despair is an unwillingness to be oneself as grounded in God. Thus man's despair or anxiety arises out of his ultimate relation to God. But by busying himself with an "outward direction" and "forgetting" the ultimate relation of the self and the Eternal, man avoids coming to grips with the one relation that can resolve his despair, namely, to will in faith to be himself in the eyes of God.

The anxiety peculiar to man's creaturehood dwells in the hidden recesses of his being. Its searching questions are seldom confronted directly, although they contribute to his feeling of disquietude and restless drivenness in life. In our culture the anxious dread that accompanies direct discussion of death or suffering precludes our finding a satisfactory answer. It is a curious irony of civilization that our ability to "grieve creatively" is frustrated by our desire to avoid the fullest acceptance of the facts.<sup>2</sup> Death becomes, in our conversation, "passing on," and suffering is always mentioned in hushed tones.

Fromm has suggested that one source of the flatness of life in general is the suppression of our acknowledgment of tragedy and the fear of death, which live an illegitimate existence among us. And he attributes it to Christianity, which "has made death unreal and tried to comfort the unhappy individual by promises of life after death."<sup>3</sup> This may be true to the extent that the individual Christian participates in the cultural tendency to deny death and to ignore tragedy. But surely the Christian Gospel is founded upon the realistic acceptance of death; and the emphasis of

<sup>2</sup> Erich Lindemann, "Symptomology and Management of Acute Grief," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, CI (1944), 141-48. The phrase "grieve creatively" is Dr. Lindemann's.

<sup>3</sup> Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, p. 245.

its hope is not so much a promise of life after death as of an eternal life that begins *now*, in that entering into the faith community where death "hath no more dominion." Indeed, one might charge the psychiatrist with furthering the very condition he deplores, for it would be naive to assume that the individual alone could face the finality of death without a profound experience of dread and without the temptation to soften its bitterness with sentimentality. Whether a man is to be carried by a "band of angels" or by ancient Cheop's heavenly vessel, he wants to have a passport ready for that journey. Every man knows the meaning of Agog's words as he stood trembling before Samuel: "Surely death is bitter" (I Sam. 15:32 Goodspeed). The bitter taste of death requires healing waters which spring into eternal life. The Christian Gospel does not flee from the reality of death. Rather because of the conviction that resurrection is the means whereby God calls His people, one by one, into the deeper realities of eternal life, the fact of death is faced, and the unfinished business of living is handed over in trust to the ongoing community of inseparable love.

We must remember that the Church lives in a culture that refuses to acknowledge tragedy and cautions man "never to grow old, never to die." Members of the Church are not unaffected by this cultural view. The Church, however, in its corporate life is one of force which presses for a more realistic acceptance of death, even though its people, for reasons not wholly within the power of the Church to alter, choose to ignore its message. The Eucharist, which is offered daily in countless churches, is a perpetual renewal of Christ's "precious death and sacrifice until His coming again"; and the burial service of the Church directs that her sons and daughters be committed to the ground with the words, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust." Christian burial is a "committal"—an acceptance of death—in the faith that whether we live or die we belong to one another in God both in life and in death. By a culture

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that appears to have lost its capacity for faith, this Christian attitude should be counted a mark of health rather than a source of illness.

There is certainly reason to believe that an adequate expression of the depth and tragic fullness of life is missing in our culture. The poets and playwrights are constantly voicing the displacement and loneliness of modern man; but the fact that their expression consists largely in sharing our sense of lost meaning and of man's exile is some indication of our lack of cultural unity. Even the words we use for communication frequently seem to reveal our distance from one another. T. S. Eliot has reminded us of our "imprecisions":

. . . words strain,  
crack and sometimes break, under the burden,  
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,  
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,  
Will not, stay still . . .<sup>4</sup>

One of the words that does not stand still is *sin*. The present generation is familiar with a kind of "emancipated religion" that almost succeeded in cutting the heart out of Christianity by ignoring man's tragic inner destructiveness. It abhorred the word *sin*, made futile efforts to explain away man's moral recalcitrancy, and prescribed "moral imperatives" with wearying repetition. In its effort to adjust faith to modern man, "enlightened" religion mistook sins for sin and shifted the emphasis from man's *being* in faith to man's *doing* in action. To be sure, Christian being and action belong together, but when religion becomes primarily morals, the tragic corruption that springs from the heart of man is either deliberately ignored or banished to the unconscious. It remains, however, to infect man's best efforts. Most of

<sup>4</sup>T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1943), p. 7. Used by permission of the publisher.

us know this, in our innermost being, as the whispered truth. Thus when Job had completed the catalogue of his virtues to thrust in the face of God, he was still unsure of himself. Perhaps, he ponders, God does know the secrets of all hearts:

Oh, that I had the indictment written by my adversary (Job 31.35).

But Job never gets a list of particulars. He must live with the knowledge that all his works can neither purchase heaven nor prove his righteousness. This, too, is a part of man's tragic existence. When his heart is imprisoned in the things he can do and when he forgets that these efforts are partial, his living, as well as his dying, becomes a journey of frustration, fraught with despair. In every pilgrimage there is anxiety. It is the companion of all our years. But that sojourner in our souls becomes a tyrant when man separates himself from God, who is the other abiding companion.

Thus the picture of man's life emerges. Existence involves freedom, and freedom is both possibility and threat. The threat of freedom drives man into separation. He becomes unsure, ambivalent, and divided within himself. He becomes an island unto himself. He stands over against God, who is the source of his freedom and existence. But freedom is also a possibility that suffers from torn and broken relations in the actual business of living. The rejected child soon learns to use his freedom either to "submit" or to "protest." In either case he loses. Here again, it can be seen that, beyond this functional difference, no simple distinction between neurotic and sinful anxiety is possible. The actions of the rejected child may be the result both of his anxiety in rejection and of his anxiety to be in the center of the universe. Here is present in him the temptation to "play God." Anxiety then is a sickness that dwells in the heart. It

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is not surprising that it should become attached to so many particular objects. Auden suggests the inexorable logic of this illness and man's ultimate predicament because of it:

. . . All that exists  
Matters to man; he minds what happens  
And feels he is at fault, a fallen soul  
With power to place, to explain every  
What in his world but why he is neither  
God nor good, this guilt the insoluble  
  
Final fact, infusing his private  
Nexus of needs, his noted aims with  
Incomprehensible comprehensive dread  
At not being what he knows that before  
This world was he was willed to become.<sup>5</sup>

### THE ANXIETY BEHIND GUILT AND "GUILT FEELINGS"

Man's anxiety is ultimately that which reveals his unique relation to God. The experience of anxiety marks man as man. For who among the animals goes through life with the feeling of having been expelled from paradise, of having been alienated from that which makes one whole? The very act of existence itself involves man in this alienation. The moment when he realizes his possibility of being and of not being and proceeds to make real his potentiality for selfhood, the anxiety of possibility is translated into the tragic anxiety and guilt of existence. The word *realize* is used here in a symbolic sense. Part of the self may *know* about the anxiety of existence, but that part lies deeply hidden. Thus with endless wit man frets over the things that occasion his anxiety, putting off forever, if possible, his acknowledgment of the fact that he is really in despair over himself and *about* the Eternal. These *things* that occa-

<sup>5</sup> Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*, p. 24. Used by permission of the publisher.

sion his anxiety obscure that which the anxiety is ultimately *about*, namely, the Eternal One, who alone is able to overcome anxiety.<sup>6</sup> One patient, after several years of therapy, came to the conviction that her ultimate anxiety, in which the problems of meaninglessness, death, and guilt were raised, had been displaced by many other life situations which she knew she "could solve, if somehow pressed," but which always seemed to be the bearers of this deeper, illusive anxiety. Thus despair may lie at the roots of man's contradictory existence and wear the mask of pride and hostility simultaneously with that of self-hatred and rejection. Such a person may drink to excess in a vain effort to quiet his anxiety and, by this same action, convince himself of his own "worthlessness." Hence man's deepest needs, under the compulsion of anxiety, may become identified with guilt. And, paradoxically, that guilt will deny those very needs.

The psychiatrist is concerned with guilt feelings more in terms of the function that self-recriminating attitudes serve than in terms of the subject of guilt. Thus Karen Horney holds "that much of what looks like feelings of guilt is the expression either of anxiety or of a defense against it."<sup>7</sup> Freud's classic "Mourning and Melancholia," described the continuance of morbid grief as a displaced guilt feeling motivated by a repressed hostility that in some way was absolved by the individual in grief activity. But if the psychiatrist overlooks the area of real guilt in man's life, he is simply closing his eyes to an important phenomenon in human experience. An "understanding" may relieve a Lady Macbeth of her compulsive hand washing and help her to go on, but her real guilt remains. No amount of "understanding" will resolve this final guilt because its ultimate ground is pride and self-idolatry. There is reason to believe

<sup>6</sup> See Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1946), pp. 97 ff. for a full discussion of this distinction.

<sup>7</sup> Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, p. 235.

that Shakespeare was voicing the Christian view that ultimate healing is the work of the Divine Physician. The doctor, called to attend Lady Macbeth, states:

Foul whisperings are abroad: unnatural deeds  
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds  
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.  
More needs she the divine than the physician.  
God, God forgive us all! (*Macbeth*, V, 1).

Anxiety, though painful, reminds man of his freedom; in a sense we may say that anxiety is the price of freedom. In exercising his freedom, however, man becomes guilty. Man is always tempted by freedom to build a tower of pride over against that which gave him existence. This is man's irresistible temptation "to play God." Guilt follows and, in its wake, hostility and despair. It is interesting to note that in her last book, *Neurosis and Human Growth*, Karen Horney sees the problems of modern man in terms of the Faustian "search for glory" with unhealthy pride as its base.<sup>8</sup> The persistent stories of man's pact with the devil make this a recurrent theme in history. Anxiety accompanies freedom; freedom, in an effort to secure itself, tends toward pride; and pride results in guilt and despair. The author of Deuteronomy pictures the people as "scattered" to the ends of the earth, serving strange gods, but finding neither ease nor rest. Why? Because they did not serve the Lord God "with joyfulness and gladness of heart." Here is a description of the inexorable progress from idolatry to despair, where the glad heart of man becomes a hopeless sigh. Because of his idolatry man is given

. . . a trembling heart, and failing eyes, and  
a languishing soul;  
your life shall hang in doubt before you;  
night and day you shall be in dread,

<sup>8</sup> Karen Horney, *Neurosis and Human Growth* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1950).

and have no assurance of your life.

In the morning you shall say, "Would it were evening!" and at evening you shall say, "Would it were morning!" because of the dread which your heart shall fear, and the sights which your eyes shall see (Deuteronomy 28:65-67).

Now then, guilt is as real as man's pride, and both are nurtured in the inescapable anxiety of existence. Clearly more is involved in the question of guilt than can be explained by regarding it merely as the subjectively felt claims of the culture. No doubt, these forces do exert their influence in guilt feelings. It is important for our understanding of guilt to be aware of the subtle and persistent nature of social pressures. For instance, it should be noted that the identity of the authority behind these claims is vague and indiscriminate: "They think I am a snob." "People will say I'm no good." "All I ever did was to pass my driver's exam." Who makes the claims here? Who expresses the judgment which produces guilt feelings? It is the anonymous voice of others that speaks here. These claims bear no sanction from God, although they may be felt as "religious" imperatives. For, in truth, they are attributable to perfectionism, fastidiousness, or success mindedness. Guilt feelings are the result of destructive claims that probably have become operative in the individual because persons important to him have pressed them upon him. It is a part of health to see that these claims that have been pressed upon us are false claims, alien to our native health. But it is also important to look beyond these claims to the pride and self-idolatry that involve us in unresolved guilt. Indeed we may say that anxiety forces man to choose a way of life. As the inescapable crisis of existence, it offers only the alternatives: in faith and trust to commit oneself to the Creator, or in frantic anxiety to banish God in favor of the self. Thus idolatry is always the temptation of anxiety. When rein-

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forced by neurotic anxiety, it issues in a tragic way of life that is familiar to all of us; and feelings of guilt are the terrible burden of that way.

Man's guilt feelings, therefore, are derived from a number of sources. In actual living, they operate together to render him more or less helpless before the real object of his guilt. Both priest and physician may treat him for a long period before this guilt is exorcized. It is hard to see how any view of life, short of faith, can deal ultimately with the problems of unavoidable anxiety and of real guilt. For these can only be understood and dealt with in religious terms. Self-knowledge gained through psychotherapy may help in relieving neurotic guilt feelings, but the task is unfinished if it fails to find and resolve the deeper source of anxiety. Perhaps it may be said of that demon, as Jesus said of a generation of anxiety-laden people,

Nothing can make this kind come out, but prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29, Moffatt).

### THE TASK OF HEALING

The distinction between real guilt and guilt feelings raises the question of how one becomes aware of their difference. How is the task of healing accomplished? The Bible affirms that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." In placing emphasis on inner attitudes the long history of biblical religion has anticipated modern psychotherapy. St. Augustine put self-searching and self-awareness at the heart of man's effort to know both himself and God. His constant prayer was:

O God, who art ever the same, let me know myself,  
let me know thee.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> St. Augustine, *Soliloquies*, I. II, 1, in *An Augustine Synthesis*, ed. Erich Przywara (London: Sheed and Ward, 1932). Used by permission of the publisher.

This emphasis on self-searching, which has been available for centuries in prayer, worship, and spiritual discipline, has become in modern psychiatric practice a means of explicit help for emotional ills. Thus the patient who is the victim of guilt feelings may discover, with the help of a therapist, the reasons why he is susceptible to distorted claims. The therapist helps the patient to see and help himself. The same patient may also go to church where, through confession and repentance, he will see himself in the eyes of God. Something akin to psychotherapy has been a necessary part of Christian penance and absolution through the centuries. There can be no doubt that, as a tool, it has been shaped with great effectiveness by modern psychiatry. It has made possible eyes that see and ears that hear. It is not, however, a substitute for that seeing and hearing in which man's soul is kept alive.

Alone and separated, even in a crowd, man never discovers himself. His distortions and his guilt, real or imagined, remain undetected. Thus his deepest need is a spiritual one, the overcoming of his loneliness and separation, and this he can accomplish only in association with another human being. Man's health is lost, but it is also regained through the medium of interpersonal relations. Every human association carries the possibility of aiding or of damaging man's health. This means that those who deal with people in their work are agents of therapy, whether they are aware of the fact or not. In medical case histories reference is frequently made to the saving and beneficial effects of one good relationship, be it with nurse, teacher, or minister; but when this one relationship is absent, a report of complete failure and of withdrawal from the arena of life concludes the history.

Granted that the healing of anxiety takes place within interpersonal relations, it should be added that healing also requires a spirit of genuine concern on the part of the

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assisting agent. And this happens when love is the measure of man's desire to help, just as skill is the measure of his ability to help. The original meaning of the verb *to heal* was *to make whole*. He who is healed is made whole again. This, then, is the task of therapy. The very word is derived from the Greek verb *therapeuo*, which means *to attend* or *to care for*. Thus therapy, or the practice of healing, is accomplished within the climate of loving care and genuine concern. Its goal is more than the removal of symptoms. It looks to the renewal of man in his depths. Every step in that direction opens up new possibilities for self-fulfillment as it knocks down the walls of loneliness. The spirit of whole-heartedness, which is the aim and goal of therapy, finds expression in St. Paul's moving hymn to love:

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (I Cor. 13:7).

While it is true that everyone who helps another person to meet a crisis or to solve a problem is involved in therapy, this must not be confused with the work of carefully trained therapists. For the painstaking endeavors of these professional helpers (medical, psychological, and pastoral) is a carefully planned effort to apply knowledge and experience in therapy for the relief of anxiety. This work requires competence and training. It is significant that pastoral counseling, as a refinement of pastoral care, is now receiving some prominence in theological training programs. Here the pastor acquires through study and clinical training something of the "methodical thoroughness" of the trained helper.

Since Freud's day the basic technique in therapy for uncovering the real problems of the subject has been "permissive" talking or "free association," a method which relies on the rule of honesty and on the effort of the subject to report all that comes into his conscious mind. Out of this "free association" come the dreams, fantasies, marginal

thoughts, bodily tensions, and the many other inner pre-occupations that make up the subject matter of discussion; and these are always discussed in relation to the personality of the one seeking help. In psychotherapy much time may be spent in "reliving" and re-evaluating emotionally charged experiences. It may be necessary to "play back" one's life, or to "abreact" as the psychiatrist would say. From clues thus obtained, a more realistic adjustment can be devised for meeting life. The fact that anxiety is largely unconscious and that it is brought into awareness with great pain means that the effort to live beyond it is a prolonged and tedious one. It requires both honesty and uncommon courage.

The aim of therapy is the rediscovery of the self that has been obscured by anxiety. Neither re-education nor rational understanding seem quite as important in achieving this goal as the establishment of a genuine relationship with the therapist. In individual terms the patient strives within this human association to rediscover his at-oneness with others, while at the same time his guilt feelings and self-contempt are progressively undermined. To be sure, a rational understanding of the difficulties in living and of their relation to character structure is important, but the patient can make confident use of these facts only as he gains the conviction that he is accepted. To be of help to one incapacitated by anxiety, the therapist must, of necessity, have a healthy regard for the processes of growth and for human striving for community. When the therapy is concluded, the subject has become a human being who enjoys both freedom and relatedness to others, whose goals are freely chosen, and whose problems in living are more adequately handled by his own native resources.

The end of therapy should be a natural outgrowth of the helping relationship itself, since therapy is aimed at progress toward inner strength in the one helped. Certainly an immediate goal of great importance is the capacity to see other people as they really are. On another level, therapy

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is successful to the extent that it draws the individual back into satisfying group living. The goal of therapy always implies that one gains anew the courage to be himself. That courage comes only through faith. For the Christian it comes as a response to God, "who was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Would it be too much to say that psychotherapy could be a preparation for Christ? It frequently produces a readiness for faith and an expectancy that is fulfilled only in the Church.

### **ANXIETY AND FAITH**

The goal of health looks not for the removal of anxiety, but for its absorption in a positively oriented faith that is outgoing and related to the ground of existence, as well as deeply rooted in present reality. This end is being furthered in our generation by psychoanalysis; but, by their own admission, many psychiatrists are limited in what they can accomplish. Their work, which is largely with the negative areas of personality, leaves many functions of the creative orientation to other forces in man's life. Individual therapy is not possible for large numbers of people; and, unfortunately, most of those who have suffered severely from the pathology of our society can hardly afford adequate medical care, and certainly they cannot afford the professional services of a psychoanalyst.

The answer to this difficulty is two-fold. Society must be sensitized to its growing casualty list of those who are the victims of its malfunctioning: those suffering from economic and personal insecurity, those victimized by its institutionalized prejudice and racial discrimination, and those whose personalities are twisted even before they emerge from youth by the modern obsession for power with its propensity for war. This is a task for government and for education, for church and for home. Its urgency can hardly be overestimated. It is a race between man's ability to adapt himself for his own welfare, and the gathering com-

plexity and self-destructive momentum of mass living. It is a task for all of us.

Second, we must rediscover and strengthen, what Otto Rank called, the "spontaneous therapies" of mankind in religion, philosophy, and art. It is here that most men fight the battle with anxiety in a deeply personal and intimate way. The remaining chapters in this book will be an exploration of the resources in the Christian faith for meeting and dealing with anxiety.

In turning to the language of faith, we should keep in mind that the religious answer is a spontaneous therapy that uses words, relations, and certain symbolic acts as the bearers of meaning, rather than as the deliberate tools of therapy. In this we recall the formulation of William James, that "feeling is the deeper source of religion, and that philosophic and theological formulas are secondary products like translations of a text into another tongue."<sup>10</sup>

"Thy faith hath made thee whole!" This is the perspective of religion: that faith and wholeness are found together. The conviction of modern psychosomatic medicine is that health, in contrast to illness, is found in those who are in communication with the wider areas of the self. This already points in the direction of the religious view that man's wholeness consists in being in touch lovingly with God and with his neighbor.

Therapy must include something more than the analysis of the negative aspects of personality. Some view of wholeness, such as that which finds expression in the interpersonal relation with the therapist and gradually in the wider associations of the individual, is the unfailing component of health. Creativity, love, courage, and faith are qualities that cannot exist as separate entities. They are found together in the whole man whose total orientation is ex-

<sup>10</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: The Modern Library), p. 422. Used by permission of Paul R. Reynolds & Son, 599 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

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pressed by these very qualities. Religious faith may serve as such an orientation. H. Flanders Dunbar, who has done much to open up the field of psychosomatic medicine, pointed out some twenty years ago that religious symbols and techniques are directed primarily toward wholes and, as such, have a distinct role in fostering health.

We may say that religion is involved in two rather fundamental needs of man, both of which are suggested by the term *religio*, if we may interpret the word to mean binding back, being whole again, overcoming shatteredness and disorder. In the first instance religion deals with man's need to realize himself. It is concerned with man's "will to be his own self," to enjoy the fullness of his being. And the degree of selfhood attained is the measure of his freedom and self-respect, and of his ability to act without coercion from without or within. In short, religion is concerned with man's unity. It is assumed, however, that in finding himself man discovers his relation to others and his ultimate relation to God, the ground and source of every relation. This latter discovery is the answer to that other fundamental need of man—namely, to relate himself in wholeness to the deepest source of his being. Freud was forced to deal with this need in what was called an "oceanic feeling." Although he had not experienced this feeling himself and attributed its presence in others to wish fantasies, Freud was forced to admit that many people had described an inner longing for that completely unifying experience which they found expressed only in religious symbols.

The Christian answer to man's anxiety is ultimately cast in terms of faith and loving communion. It is through meeting on this deepest level that, in the New Testament, the sick are healed, the mourners comforted, and the poor inspired with zeal. By such faith the man Saul discovers a new being, and in that communion he is never separated from the love of God. Genuine faith involves more than the acceptance and recital of certain creeds. Man's loyalty and

faith spring from his unreserved participation in that faith community to which in life, as in death, his being is committed as into the hands of God. The reality of that relationship of trust is his source of courage and strength to accept with honesty his own predicament, and yet to live by faith. Job's agonized cry is some measure of the strength of that ultimate trust:

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him (Job 13:15, AV).

The language of faith is symbol and myth. It is indeed difficult for this age, which, despite recent efforts to overcome the gap between mind and body, is still under the influence of Cartesian dualism, to appreciate the very real connection between symbol and reality. On the negative side Freud has accomplished much simply by insisting that obsessive and compulsive acts have meaning. But his prejudice against religion apparently kept him from developing the positive side of his insight—namely, that religious symbols have a creative meaning and function in the total personality. Neurotic symbols, as Rank and others have observed, tend in the direction of ineffectual gestures away from reality; creative symbols, however, are meaningful actions that enhance reality. Religious symbols, whether they be biblical stories or liturgical acts, strive to fulfill the function of creative symbols. They are bearers of a meaning and a truth that can only be expressed through living portraiture and dramatic action. The great stories of the Bible portray God's relation to man by way of analogy. To be sure, it is impossible to portray in any word or story the full meaning of God for man, but the Bible through its account of the mighty acts of God in history and the Church in her liturgy open the way for man to live into and to become part of the community of grace and trust that God has called into being.

Man's affirmation of the great truths of biblical religion—the creation and fall of man, his sin, redemption and salva-

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tion, and Christian life and sacraments—has always been made as an outcome of his wrestling with the realities of life. The threat of anxiety is a part of that reality that is the common concern of every man, as well as of the pastor and the professional helper. In the following chapters we shall attempt to explore the meaning and resolution of anxiety for Christian faith.

*Part II*

**ANXIETY AND THE CHRISTIAN  
VIEW OF MAN**



## WHAT IS MAN?

“For what are we, my brother?” asks the poet,  
“We are a phantom flare of grieved desire . . .  
A brevity of days haunted by the eternity  
of the earth . . .  
We are a twist of passion,  
A moment’s flame of love and ecstasy . . .  
An almost captured beauty . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Man is haunted not only by the “eternity of the earth,” but also by his lost life, which might have been. The sense of lostness and fugitive wandering that has existed since the days of Cain is heightened by modern man’s excruciating loneliness. The heroic figure who only yesterday expelled God from his world and loudly proclaimed his own emancipation looks in vain for a companion to share his empty victory. His search is fruitless, because in a world of proud individualism the community of sharing has disappeared. What is left? Only nameless crowds, without faces. Those that dwell in the midst of crowds know the depths of that loneliness! Those others that flee into solitude, or into fantasy, find, with Job, only unsettling disturbance, like the fretful sleep of fugitives. This is the reality of man’s life: loneliness and exile.

From this perspective much of modern thought may be regarded as an effort to explain the reason for man’s

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Wolfe, *A Stone, a Leaf, a Door* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1950), pp. 77-78. Used by permission of the publisher.

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discontent. We have searched every nook and corner of God's universe for an answer. We have located the trouble in our institutions, in our economy, even in our religion; but never in man himself. The permanent crisis, however, through which we are living is now tending to shift our attention once more to the crucial question, What is man? This is the inescapable self-knowledge to which we are coming under the hammer blows of modern life. The poets, the playwrights, and the novelists are reflecting our renewed concern with the mystery and paradox that is man. Somehow our common experience has taught us that it is not enough to say that man is shaped by his institutions, propelled by his economic concerns, and patterned by his emotional conditioning. All these things are true, but man is more than the total of these. What is man? He is a center of vitality—a striving, yearning, choosing, and rebelling creature whose final pain and joy is strangely related to that fugitiveness that he feels. For that pain is turned to joy, not through anything he can possess or even do, but through the knowledge arising from faith that his struggle has purpose, that God seeks and finds him in his exile.

### UNITY AND SOLIDARITY

Berdyaev has said that "solitude is a late product of advanced culture."<sup>2</sup> Primitive man lives primarily in and through his social group. Only the advanced societies can afford the radical individualism to which we are accustomed. The ravages of loneliness in our day raise the question that perhaps our zeal for individualism has cost us real living. Shared life is prior to solitude in more respects than is man's evolutionary development. Shared life is the necessary condition within which alone the individual man can develop. It is in his capacity to share—to see, hear, and respond to others—that man's uniqueness is realized.

<sup>2</sup> Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Beginning and the End* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), p. 216.

This capacity to communicate with others throws light on the use of the term *human nature* in the Christian Church. It should in no way imply a fixed entity that is the standard endowment of every human being. The social scientists have demonstrated emphatically that personality structures vary from one culture to another and that the notion of an invariable human nature cannot be supported. On the other hand, if we regard human nature not as a finished product, but as the raw material from which human character is built, the objections seem to be met. Modern psychiatry has taught us not only that the variety of personality manifestation is infinite, but also that, for all these ranges of variation, we are more alike than different. It is that *alikeness*, conceived not in terms of rigid personality inventory, but in terms of the unique consciousness of the human being that is indicated by the term *human nature*. And it is here that the ultimate foundation of human character and conduct is to be found.

Our awareness of the manifold variableness of human character makes it difficult for us to appreciate the way in which Christian theology speaks of man. It should be remembered, however, that the ancient world conceived of humanity in terms of *unity* and *solidarity*, a conception modern thought is only beginning to recover through the insights of psychosomatic medicine and the *wholeness* perspective. Both the Greeks and the Hebrews assumed that every man is represented in any one man and that a whole people could be symbolized in a single figure. But in the biblical view, the unity and solidarity of man is rooted in God as the Lord of all creation. Israel knew Him first as the "God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"—that is, through Israel's personal and concrete experience of that faith. Apart from this community of faith, the individual as such had no status. Through this community of faith, the Israelite not only lived but found completion, his "I" responding to the divine "Thou." This re-

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lation was the source of that continuing renewal recorded in biblical history:

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house;  
they will be alway praising thee.

Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee;  
in whose heart are Thy ways . . .

They will go from strength to strength . . . (Psalm 84:4-5 and 7a).

Berdyaev, who speaks from the ancient tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy, has expressed the view of man familiar to the world of antiquity, the view that is being recovered today:

Man is not a fragmentary part of the world but contains the whole riddle of the universe and the solution of it.<sup>8</sup>

For the Greek, and especially for the Stoic, that “riddle” was associated with the Word, *logos*, the divine light of the “hidden harmony” that shines through every man. Later the Hebraic Christians were to woo their Gentile neighbors with the proclamation that the *logos* had become flesh, and that through the death and resurrection of Christ the way had been opened for all men to be restored to unity with God. It was this sense of unity and solidarity, held by the ancients, that prepared the way for the acceptance of the Christian view of man, his fall in Adam and his redemption in Christ.

### IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

In the Bible man is God’s creature, made in His own image. Man is called by God into being, and his distinctive selfhood is fulfilled only through his freely acknowledged dependence upon God. This essential relationship—the *that*

<sup>8</sup> Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Destiny of Man* (New York: Chas. Scribner’s Sons, 1937), p. 59.

in man which refers back to God—remains, even in estrangement, as a reminder that *to live* is to know God, and to be apart from God *is to be in death*, even in the midst of life.

Lady Blackwell, in T. S. Eliot's play, *The Confidential Clerk*, speaks of the image of God in man when she declares,

. . . of course, there's something in us,  
In all of us, which isn't just heredity,  
But something unique. Something we have been  
From eternity. Something . . . straight from God.  
That means that we are nearer to God than to anyone.<sup>4</sup>

That "something straight from God" accounts for the restlessness in man, which never ceases until he returns to God. The image of God in man seeks responsive expression through his freedom and his selfhood. Indeed, the only full freedom and selfhood man ever knows comes when his life is shaped according to the image of God and lived in relation to God. This is the condition in which man can most truly be himself.

The significance of man's utter dependency upon God is further emphasized in these words from the Genesis account:

Then the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; And man became a living soul (Genesis 2:7, AV).

Man is a "*living soul*," dependent for continuing life upon the breath of God. Without that life-giving breath, he is but a handful of dust. We see here that the emphasis of Hebrew psychology is not upon a dualism of body and soul, but upon "*living soul*" and its opposite, nothingness. For the Hebrew the experience of Ezekiel was universal.

<sup>4</sup>T. S. Eliot, *The Confidential Clerk* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1954), p. 87. Used by permission of the publisher.

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Ezekiel had been ordered, you will recall, to stand upon his feet, but he found that he could not do so until “the spirit entered into” him and set him upon his feet (Ezekiel 2:1-2). In God’s relation to man, creation is continued when man responds to the spirit of God and when that spirit enters and strengthens him. Alone, man is helpless to become what God intended him to be; but neither does God’s plan call for man’s self-annihilation. He becomes himself most fully, that is, a *living soul* in touch with himself and others, only in a faith-trust relationship with God.

### THE IMAGE OF GOD AND ESSENTIAL MAN

“In the beginning God created . . .” Thus begins the biblical account of creation of which man’s creation is a part. In that account he shares in the goodness and in the harmony of creation. Some Christian views posit an “original righteousness” in an historical sense, but it is our understanding that the goodness and the harmony of creation are both present and lost in every man’s experience.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, we have already said that the image of God in man remains even when he is separated from God; it becomes, under this condition, a reminder of that prior harmony. In the story of Adam man’s created wholeness is symbolized before the fall in his innocence. He is pictured as participating unconsciously in that unity of creation, which is, according to one Psalmist, the spontaneous worship of all creation before the Creator:

All Thy works praise thee, O Lord,  
And thy saints give thanks unto thee (Psalm 145:10).

\*This view finds expression in Edward John Bickwell’s paper in *Essays Catholic and Critical*, ed. E. G. Selwyn (London: SPCK, 1950): “It is quite conceivable that there once was a time when the human race was developing on right lines, a period of what we might call, to use the old term, ‘original righteousness’” (p. 222).

The term *image of God* summarizes man's essential endowment at the time of his creation. One might say, indeed, that a full understanding of this term will convey some idea of what God intended for man in the beginning. It may also stand as a symbol of man's true relationship to God, and to himself when he is most truly himself. But how shall we describe essential man?

We have already identified an important aspect of man's being when we used the biblical designation "living soul." This descriptive phrase points up the significance of man's wholeness in creation. It belongs to, and is dependent upon, his relation to God. On the other hand, man's wholeness is shattered and lost when he ceases to have a living connection with God. It is in this sense that the biblical contrast is between faith which is life, and rebellion which is death, rather than between existence and non-existence. Indeed, the Genesis account would lead us to believe that death was not a part of God's original plan for man. It is a sign of the judgment under which man stands in sin. In the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul speaks of the two dominions: that of death bequeathed to us in Adam, and that of new life made possible in Christ. For us, wholeness or salvation constitutes the reality of the new life in Christ. To die means separation and fragmentation. But it should be remembered that the Hebrews had no word for wholeness. Man is either a living soul profoundly in touch with himself through God, or he is dead and set apart from God's vitalizing breath. It is significant that we have been forced in our day to reconstruct the concept of wholeness that is implied in the word *psychosomatic*, and yet the Bible understands and identifies this reality simply as *life*.

Man is a living soul, a part of God's creation—but with a difference. He is set at the head of creation to have "dominion" over it, and he is possessed of a finite freedom and selfhood that he must relate to God. In *The Pillar of*

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*Fire*, a moving account of a spiritual pilgrimage, Karl Stern notes that a certain rabbi insisted that an even more fundamental proposition than “Love thy neighbor,” is “He created man in His own image.” The violence and the degradation that many persecuted groups in modern history have suffered underlines that wisdom. Man is an upright creature who knows the sound of God’s voice, and he cannot be understood as a child of nature, or even as a brother to man, without first acknowledging his relation to God. The Bible pictures man as the only animal that enjoys this relatedness and similarity, that hears and responds to God’s voice. One of the psalmists is moved to ecstasy when he dwells on this aspect of man’s life:

Yet thou hast made him little less than God,  
And dost crown him with glory and honor.  
Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy  
hands (Psalm 8:5-6, RSV).

But this picture of man requires the balance of another psalmist:

I say, ‘you are gods,  
sons of the Most High, all of you;  
Nevertheless, you shall die like men,  
And fall like any prince’ (Psalm 82:6-7, RSV).

Man’s dominion is limited. There are boundaries he cannot pass. His expansiveness is met with the remainder that apart from God he is but the dust of the earth.

Man is made in the image of God, and the glory of that image tempts him to imagine the opposite, that God is the projection of man’s mind. This idolatry makes it possible for man to imagine that he controls God. In this connection it seems significant that the Hebrews had no word for *religion*. Their nearest equivalent is contained in the verse:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10).

For the Hebrew man's essential relation to God is one that keeps him ever mindful that the crucial fact of his existence is his dependence on God; his "liveliness" always refers back to God.

It follows from what has been said that in the biblical view man can be understood neither as an end in himself, nor in relation to nature, but only as a child of God. The humanist counsels man to be "for himself," but the autonomous self is cut off from that judgment and grace which makes newness possible. The experimental psychologist sees man's every movement reflected in the conditioned reflexes of mice and other laboratory animals. But the prophet Jeremiah observed long before, that there is one important difference between man and animal:

Even the stork in the heavens  
    knows her times;  
and the turtledove, swallow, and crane  
    keep the time of their coming;  
but my people know not  
    the ordinance of the Lord (Jeremiah 8:7).

Where the animals "know" and live by the appointed order of nature, man must discover and decide for himself. This act of decision implies both a freedom and distinctive self-hood, those painful realities of his existence that forever tempt him to give up his manhood and to seek release in an animal-like existence. But there is One who is acquainted with all man's ways, One who seeks without haste, without ceasing. The everlasting God lets man go his own way, but He does not let him go alone. He waits for man with a terrible patience. Beyond all fleeing, His voice is hope: "Come again, ye children of men." There comes a time when man "knows," in the words of the Shorter Catechism, that

his "chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

We have been considering the significance of the image of God in man. The vital relation to God that this term signifies is made explicit in the portrayal of the relation of man and woman. It hardly seems accidental (even though the creation of Eve comes as a divine afterthought) that man's life evolves from the beginning as a communal affair. We have it from the Creator Himself that "it is not good for man to be alone." Man is incomplete when he is alone. This truth is amply demonstrated in every study of human relations. Loneliness and isolation are accompanied by the loss of humanity. But what has *not* been demonstrated or emphasized enough, is the fact that every man, even the mythical self-made man, is dependent upon a supporting and responsive community for the barest realization of himself. At the heart of that community is the profound meeting of man and woman, where they become *one flesh* and, under God, begin to complete each other's incompleteness. The meeting and the response, signified by that expression *one flesh*, is another manifestation of man's peculiar endowment, namely, that he is made in the image of God. *Henosis* (*one flesh*) indicates a profound coming together and points in the direction of man's ultimate relation to God, where knowing and being known are comprehended only in the heights and depths of man's being and where faith speaks to the whole man.

#### MAN IN EXISTENCE

Man's endowment in creation finds expression in finite freedom. In essential man that freedom is the means whereby he responds wholeheartedly to God. Response requires freedom and selfhood, for the answering word must come from one who knows himself to be free and individual, though related to God by faith. This is the picture of man before his expulsion from Eden; this is everyman in dreaming innocence: He lives by the word of God. His life is a

spontaneous fulfillment of God's blessing in creation. In psychiatric terms, one might say that essential man is free to *actualize* his freedom. But the *actuality* of man's freedom, in the sense of actual history as we know it, is always accompanied by the loss of innocence. The harmony of creation that man remembers as the effortless capacity to serve God is destroyed from within at the very moment freedom becomes a matter of actual choice. In the instant he is driven to decision by the inevitable dilemma of freedom, man experiences first, anxiety, and then, sin and guilt. His anxiety is symbolized in the tempting words of the serpent that sought to reassure a wavering Eve that the consequence of grasping her own freedom would surely not be death, but the knowledge of good and evil! There is a curious wisdom in the serpent's words, for the disobedience before God that seems to be an inevitable part of man's exercise of freedom issues not in his annihilation, but in his knowledge of good and evil, particularly of his own guilt and shame. And this separation is, indeed, death.

As long as man escapes recognition of his own involvement in guilt, he may attribute his condition to the sin of others or to accident. How many marriage partners live on the assumption that fate has dealt them a cruel blow, in placing them with intolerable partners? While a spouse may be insufferable, he or she represents only part of the decision which created the marital union. The reality of freedom and the necessity of choice forces the inescapable question of personal involvement in every decision. When man is faced with the inevitable fact, not only of his own responsibility in freedom, but also of his own guilt in its exercise, the question *What is man?* becomes a vital concern. That question, applied in the most personal way, involves asking, "Who am I?" The answer is little short of devastating when candor prevails. G. K. Chesterton has remarked that, whatever this question means, it conveys the truth "that I am not myself." When man comes to the conviction that

he is not himself as created by God, he is ready to hear what Chesterton has called the “good news of original sin.” Indeed, that man is not himself—nor can he be apart from God—is good news to those that have felt the weight of hopelessness in man’s effort to save himself.

The dignity of man and his misery have the same root —his radical freedom. He is free to turn away from God. He is free to choose nothingness. But whether his choice be in faith or in separation from God, he must live through the anxiety involved in deciding. That anxiety represents the constant threat of freedom. It is a part of existence. It may be associated with loneliness, or with the fear of death and disease, or simply with the fear of decision. In any case this primal anxiety is “free floating” and lends an atmosphere of disquiet to life, even apart from the transformation of anxiety by sin. Kierkegaard, in equating dread with the possibility of freedom, calls it education for faith, because ultimately dread is answered only in faith. Dread or anxiety is the mark of actual existence, just as innocence and freedom are the signs of created goodness. Kierkegaard understood the profound significance of dread in much the same way in which depth psychology understands anxiety. He wrote: “Dread is a qualification of the dreaming spirit . . . it is different from fear and similar concepts which refer to something definite, whereas dread is the reality of freedom as possibility anterior to possibility. One does not therefore find dread in the beast, precisely for the reason that by nature the beast is not qualified by the spirit.”<sup>6</sup>

The threat of freedom that man experiences as anxiety becomes a temptation to sin. He may wish to give up his freedom or grasp it possessively, but in either case the consequences of his action involve guilt. He can avoid neither the anxiety of freedom nor the guilt involved in its use! Christ has given us a picture of the debilitating agony of

<sup>6</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Dread* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1946), p. 38. Used by permission of the publisher.

this necessity of choice in his parable of the talents. The third man received one talent. In a frenzy of anxiety he buried it in the ground thinking thus to protect his innocence against the day of his Lord's accounting. But he was excoriated for his pains, and all was taken from him. His attempt to escape the threat of freedom was no more successful than Eve's defiance in grasping it. Both experienced anxiety and both succumbed to sin. It is man's freedom that makes history possible, that makes the fulfillment of self-hood a desirable goal of living, and sin a fact of existence. The paradox of man's life is that in his anxiety to avoid guilt he becomes guilty. In terms familiar to psychiatry, anxiety creates the very condition it wishes to avoid. But this anxiety of existence cannot be avoided. Neither therapy nor education can hope to remove the necessity of facing up to this basic anxiety. It is a part of man's finitude, for this irreducible apprehensiveness is rooted in the fact that man belongs both to the finite world that changes and to the infinite world that remains. Moreover, this apprehensiveness can easily be transformed by sin and guilt into the compulsive and specific anxiety that stalks man's life. It is not man's finitude, nor his dependence as such, that tempts him to sin, but his anxiety about them. Anxiety is the soil that breeds sin, but it is not identical with sin. The possibility remains that faith can control the anxiety of finitude. That possibility must be considered against the reality of man's "untrustingness." Faith prepares man for trust, but anxiety keeps him suspended between holding back and yielding; so like the child in Robert Frost's poem who was caught in the sudden recoil of a tree branch, he falters helplessly between his fear and his pride:

I had not taken the first step in knowledge;  
I had not learned to let go with the hands,  
As still I have not learned to with the heart . . .<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Robert Frost, "Wild Grapes," *New Hampshire* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1923), p. 49. Used by permission of the publisher.

## FALLEN MAN

A recurring sentiment throughout the Book of Job takes the form, "I loathe my life . . ." These words strike a responsive chord in that they express a deeply felt resentment against life as it is, a resentment that appears to be universal. Even Porcupine, of comic-strip fame, hoped that his vacation would make a new man of him, because he didn't like the old man. Kierkegaard weaves a delightful parable around a single lily which came to bloom in a lovely valley.<sup>8</sup> That lily, beautiful as only nature fashions beauty, became dissatisfied with itself when a chattering bird claimed that the lilies in another meadow were even more beautiful. Finally, in desperation, the lily persuaded the bird to pluck it up by the roots and to transplant it into that more desirable place. Deprived of its life-giving soil, however, the lily died en route. Now such a story is foolish, the author concludes, when it concerns a lily, because lilies do not do such things. But men do! They are forever rejecting their lot, forever refusing to be themselves.

The refusal to accept himself as God has made him, and the life-long striving to make himself over in terms of his own prideful image is the characteristic of man. In this sense disobedience before God is man's original and continuing sin. He refuses to be himself as a child of God, and that disobedience is his downfall. The Bible has pictured the fall of man in the simple, but profound, story of Adam and Eve. Even before the act of eating the fruit, something was amiss in paradise. Eve savored the fruit before she tasted it, and Adam was near enough to smack his lips! Man's fall cannot be adequately pictured in an act of disobedience, for it is an inner rebellion before it becomes an actual fact. Ultimately, the Christian view is a paradox that recognizes that sin must in some way posit itself, for

<sup>8</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *The Gospel of Suffering and the Lilies of the Field* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1948), pp. 178 ff.

even in innocence the presence of anxiety suggests that man is already in sin. The fall of man means the loss of that harmony in which he was created and a contradictory existence in which anxiety is the driving force, an anxiety that alternates between pride and guilt, hostility and despair.

The story of Adam and Eve is the biblical way of accounting for man's fallen existence and his remembered innocence. As we have seen, this poetic way of picturing man's fall has a significance which goes beyond the act of Eve's eating the forbidden fruit. It is a picture of what happens to every person, again and again. Bishop Gore thus interprets this:

We are fallen by our iniquity. Thus Adam and Eve stand for every man and woman, and the story of their fall is the true story of humanity and of what has been its ruin in every individual case.

It is interesting that Freud, in his studies of human behavior, also produced a myth that helped him understand man's ambivalent actions. Freud postulated an original murder of the father of the clan by sons who coveted their father's wives. Consequently, every child experiences both a forbidden desire and a resultant guilt, which Freud has called the Oedipus complex.

Apart from its incestual setting, but seen with Freud's broad view of sex in mind, the fall of man, as pictured in psychoanalysis, appears to have much in common with the biblical picture. In both, man's ambivalent behavior is regarded as having its origin in an unwillingness to accept the givenness of one's self as a child (and not the parent or God) and in rebellious action that results in feelings of guilt. It would seem that Freud never connected his final theory of anxiety, wherein the anxiety arises from a deeply hidden "death instinct," with his postulation of the Oedipus complex. But they are consistent in that the logical end of radical

rebelliousness in both is self-destruction and a preference for death (even though it be slow death in living), rather than an acceptance of the givenness of life. The individual vows that he will be all or nothing; he becomes a Nietzschean "superman," defiant of the gods! From this side, guilt feelings become a restraining and protective screen against an uncompromising self-will whose possession of the parent is only one step along the road either to complete dominance or to death. Anxiety remains the whispered truth in the depths of man's soul that his assertion of himself is fraught with inescapable dangers. In the biblical view, as in the Freudian, that anxiety is easily transformed into a compulsive force that robs man of his freedom.

For the Christian, rejection of the self that is given means an unwillingness to accept the self in relation to God. Sin is disobedience before God, a turning away from the source of life. When this takes place, a man busily endeavors to "prove his own life by much work, by cleverness, or by a constant running away to forget. From the riches of her clinical experience, Frieda Fromm-Reichmann gives us this comment on one who felt essentially worthless:

A person who felt worthless and hated in his childhood may, more or less, purposely behave in an offensive way in later years, namely, insolently, in order to arouse hatred for his behavior. It is more bearable to feel hated for what one does than for what one is.<sup>9</sup>

It is this deeply felt anxiety about *what we are* that hurts most. It stands behind our feverish activities, undermines our satisfactions, and betrays an emptiness in much of our "doings." Those that seek help in counseling complain frequently that neither their work, nor their marriage, nor their hobby "makes any difference." The reality of their

<sup>9</sup> Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, *Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), p. 53.

lives remains a poor substitute for the dreams they cherish. Many who never seek help and never give up the illusion that life's emptiness will be redeemed by some windfall, look forward with mounting desperation to what tomorrow may bring. A character in a recent popular novel kept saying to herself bitterly, "There must be something more than this!"

That "something more" comes not as the product of what man does, but of what he is. What we are determines what we do. *Being* precedes *doing*, and modern man is frustrated in the effort to reverse this relationship. He learns too late that he cannot become a new person by following "five easy rules for living," or by changing his brand in life's trivia, or even by "trying hard." The anxious man has become convinced that the underwriting of his deepest happiness lies outside his God-given self in someone else, or in what he can do, or in what he can possess. The truth is, however, that none of these things can "make any difference" if at heart man has lost faith in himself as the beloved of God. The confidence of Christian man springs from that renewing love which accompanies the conviction that although of ourselves we remain unchanged, it is by the inexplicable gift of Christ that we become "new beings." In that confidence a man may find himself—his whole self as intended by God. (Without faith man never knows the meaning of wholeness. He genuinely becomes himself not by achieving certain goals, but by recovering through faith and trust that wholeness which is always his when he is in touch with God.)

In the developing program of Christian education in the Episcopal Church, it has been found helpful to meet with small groups of lay people over a weekend and to discuss with them the place of the parish in Christian nurture. Frequently, the discussions during such a conference are climaxed by a mock drama in which the type of problem

that a troubled Christian frequently encounters is made the theme. Out of one such recent discussion this hypothetical personality emerged:

Mr. I. W. Hooper, an inactive member of the parish, faces a crisis when he fails to receive on his job a promotion he desires. His failure to win this crucial advancement takes on the character of desperation, and he is now on the road to becoming an alcoholic. Last night a member of the parish met Mr. Hooper in town and found him in a helpless state of drunkenness. This friend took him home and promised to call on him the next day. The question facing the concerned Christian is how he may use his contact with Mr. Hooper in such a way as to convey Christian acceptance and grace. The caller knows that Mr. Hooper is in his middle years, married, and the father of two children who have recently married and established their own homes. Further, it is known that neither Mr. Hooper nor his wife attends church regularly, although she has been active in several church organizations. Discreet inquiries disclose that Mr. Hooper has tended to depend heavily on social and economic status for his self-esteem and that his wife has complained bitterly from time to time that "he lives for his work and for nothing else!"

Mr. Hooper presents a great challenge to the average churchman, because he so evidently seems "to need something to hold on to," or "to have a job where he can forget his problems," or "to be made to feel important again." While all these prescriptions may be relevant, if they are actually employed in Mr. Hooper's case, they come dangerously close to the manipulation of one person by another; and they are likely to leave that gentleman with the conviction that his ultimate relation to Christian life rests in the hands of these successful, though obviously less humble, churchmen.

At the heart of Mr. Hooper's problem is the fact that he cannot believe that God accepts him because God created

him. He has striven to win his own self-esteem by what he can do and by what he can possess. It is likely that this way of estimating his own worth dates from earliest childhood and that the unreasonable claims of other people have helped to magnify the problem. In other words, it must be admitted that there is some pathology here; but in view of the universal nature of the anxiety behind such behavior, it can hardly be considered unique. Mr. Hooper's deepest need is the recovery of his humanity, a recovery that can neither be purchased nor manufactured by his own efforts. It must come as a free gift. If this man is to be restored to himself, it will be through a new relation to those that are able to give to him of themselves. Where anxiety has been resolved in faith, that kind of "gift-giving" is present; and we recognize it as one of the marks of the true Church.

It is significant that in the actual performance of this mock drama the one that plays the part of I. W. Hooper has usually resisted every effort on the part of his callers to manipulate him by prescriptions, but has responded only in those instances where the visitors offered a simple human relationship without any strings attached. It would seem that, to some extent, all of us share Mr. Hooper's dilemma and perhaps, for that very reason, know that we shall not be helped by one that is anxiously trying to prove himself. When that anxiety is present as a compulsive force, the individual has already lost the self that he is striving to preserve. The effort to secure the self under the compulsion of anxiety succeeds only in alienating the self and in destroying the ground of its security and being in God.

We live under the impact of the fall of man. Insofar as we can stand off and view it at all, we do so through faith and in Christ. Indeed, it is only within the strength of that relationship that man has the courage to face his own sin. Every perspective is a fallen one. But man is not without hope so long as the image of God remains. For that image is a promise that is always finding fulfillment when broken

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and lost men turn from their anxious ways to the quiet strength and wholeness that is theirs before God.

### **VIEWS OF MAN**

We have set forth throughout this chapter the view that the crucial factor in the understanding of man's problem is his freedom. Although he is conditioned in many ways, man is still a creature of freedom and of inescapable decision. He is more than inert matter. His own will is a part of every action. If his life is a paradox, the decisive forces that shape that riddle must be sought within, not outside, man. It is equally true that since man's every perspective is a fallen one, he has an indefatigable propensity to locate the cause of his trouble in someone or something else. There is humor, as well as pathos, in Adam's effort to hide his own sin by blaming Eve. But that lady recovered quickly enough, and a hapless serpent was saddled with the blame!

The fact that Adam hid from God is symbolic of man's effort to escape responsibility for his own sin. Every view of human nature represents something of man's endless search for some other reason for his real condition. Hence, those that say that man is "nothing but" an animal, disregard the claims of the spirit and concentrate on man's animal-like-ness. On the other hand, those that regard man exclusively in terms of his mind or spirit conveniently forget the vital demands of the body. Either view, whether secular or quasi-Christian, leaves man certainly less human and the pawn of forces outside himself. The biblical view of man stands in contrast to either of these fragmented outlooks. In it man is fashioned in the image of God, and yet, apart from his relation to God, he remains but the dust of the earth.

Many within the fold of Christianity place less emphasis on the fall of man. They regard its consequences as less serious than does the view presented here. This is true particularly of those moral theologians whose concept of man suggests an orderly relation between nature and grace.

They deny the profound tragedy of the fall, since any admission of a radical break in man's relationship would preclude the necessary transition in their doctrine from man in nature to man in grace. Man's essential wholeness, they claim, is continuous and unbroken. Grace is simply the completion of the natural by divine action. And the fall is only a regression to a lower level, without impairment of man's essential goodness. One indication, in this view, that humanity has suffered no profound disruption is the tendency to regard man as able to do the good that he knows. Moral theology then becomes a codification of answers to behavior problems, answers that all too often are shallow and ready-made. Thus it would seem that the *a priori* solutions for human problems, offered by some casuists, betray an unconscious Pelagianism, that is, a denial of man's inability to live by moral rules. William Temple has noted this tendency in Thomism (if not in St. Thomas Aquinas himself) to underestimate "the awful pervasiveness and potency of sin" in all departments of human life, and he adds:

. . . the suggestion is easily given that if we can find the right spiritual and psychological technique for remedying what we have seen to be wrong, we can put ourselves right with God.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast to this view there is the biblical realism of St. Paul and prophetic Christianity, which insists that the fall is a radical disruption that reaches to the very roots of man's nature. In the fall man turns from God and loses his soul. Henceforth his life is motivated not by service to God, but by slavery to his own pride and anxiety. That slavery will not be broken either by "good intentions" or "good advice." The words of Luther's great hymn sound the depths of man's need of redemption:

<sup>10</sup> Quoted by Canon A. E. Baker in *William Temple and His Message* (Penguin Book, 1946), p. 60.

Did we in our own strength confide,  
Our striving would be losing;  
Were not the right man on our side,  
The man of God's own choosing.

A secularized version of this liberal view of man appears also in the thinking of those that make scientific method a philosophy of life. They seem to assume implicitly that an underlying harmony (or structure) of nature will reassert itself if the distortions of living conditions and, in some cases, the counsels of "antiquated religion" are removed. This combination of a rather light view of man's basic problems together with an antagonism to religion was characteristic of the early thinking of psychology. It is relatively absent in the thinking of psychiatry today, although some shock was created not long ago by the extreme statement of an eminent psychiatrist who warned against, what he called, "the artificially imposed inferiority, guilt and fear," fed by parents, teachers, priests, and "others with a vested interest" and urged that these be thrown off in order to have a lasting peace.<sup>11</sup> But in general, psychiatry has moved in the direction of limiting its general prescriptions for mankind's problems and of profoundly appreciating the ambivalence in man that complicates the throwing off of deep-seated attitudes.

In this connection, Christian thinkers will certainly admit that parents, teachers, and priests have it within their power to use their relation to children and others for neurotic ends. They participate, however, in a culture that tends to

<sup>11</sup> G. B. Chisholm, "The Reestablishment of Peacetime Society," in *Psychiatry*, IX (1946), 1-11. Dr. Chisholm seems to think that the crying need for this atomic age is "freedom from moralities . . . to think." The evil authorities who sell "poisonous certainties" and "artificially imposed inferiority" must be replaced by liberated thinking. Dr. Gotthard Booth in commenting on Dr. Chisholm's paper says, "It remains to be seen whether the substitute of the atomic bomb for old-fashioned hellfire will make people more responsible." ("Anxiety Concerning Disease," a paper presented to the Seminar on Religion and Health, Columbia University, New York, November, 1946.)

use any relationship for neurotic purposes. The Christian understanding of man, too, may be held in rigid terms and used to control others, just as medical knowledge may be exploited to dominate others. But the fact that the Christian understanding of man may be misused does not make it an "artificially imposed" burden. It is an insight that arises from an awareness of man's serious disruption in existence and his tragic division in sin.

In the Christian view of man, anxiety is that which distorts the original harmony of creation. Sin and guilt accompany the leap into existence, and man's life is marked by tragic ambivalence. His contradictions cannot be removed simply by letting the harmony re-establish itself. His wound is much too deep. In this connection it is interesting to note that most psychoanalysts appear to have abandoned the earlier view that the analyst exercises no direct control in the analysis and that therapy proceeds simply by the process of letting the harmony of nature reassert itself. Most analysts now agree that they have a responsibility to guide in some measure the course of the analysis. It is clear that any helper must go beyond the rule of "letting nature take its course," even though in most cases "nature" is on the side of health. The analyst that becomes concerned for the welfare of his patient beyond his consulting room because there is not a community that will support and sustain the changed person, has already moved in the direction of a more profound understanding of man's tragic condition. Psychiatry has been particularly successful in searching out the causes of man's illness. Its next task is to strengthen the hand of any force that makes for freedom and wholeness in the totality of man's living.

#### THE ROLE OF ANXIETY

The fact is that anxiety is at the base of man's life. It is always there, tempting man to reject the givenness of his existence and to build a fortress around himself against the

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world. It is anxiety that distorts the "Christian understanding" into a way of controlling others, as Dr. Chisholm justly observed; but anxiety will also distort any other interpretation since the anxious person always is driven, in all he undertakes, by his own insatiable need for security. A doctrine or a theory is easily converted into a "weapon" in the service of anxiety. What much scientific thought does not seem to recognize fully is the ineradicable character of anxiety. Indeed, the very multiplication of therapies for anxiety in our age is one indication that man is frantically searching for "balm" to heal this deep wound. In some ways our condition is like that of the late Middle Ages, when anxiety accompanied the break-up of the medieval synthesis and the people turned to pilgrimages, adorations, and indulgences in a desperate search for salvation. There was the same driving motive then to reduce therapy to techniques and thus to lay hold of salvation and to assuage anxiety. Today, this anxiety is evident in the loneliness of the individual and in the lack of real community life. Paul Tillich has written of this estrangement in modern man as follows:

Modern man has a profound feeling of estrangement or self-alienation from his genuine and true being, of enmity within himself and within his world, of separation from the ultimate source of being and meaning.<sup>12</sup>

Otto Rank observed the same "fear of being alone, of loneliness, the loss of the feeling of kinship with others, finally with the all," which compels man to flee before life and seek stable ground, even illusory stability, in neurotic behavior and frantic activity.<sup>13</sup>

If we keep in mind the universality of anxiety, the force

<sup>12</sup> Paul Tillich, "Estrangement and Reconciliation in Modern Thought," *Review of Religion*, IX (1944), 5.

<sup>13</sup> Otto Rank, *Will Therapy and Truth and Reality* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), p. 155.

of Freud's second anxiety theory gains renewed authority. It will be recalled that dynamic psychiatry reacted against certain mechanical aspects of Freud's thought. In an attempt to correct this, it introduced the cultural setting and the interpersonal factor that Freud had strangely ignored in the formulation of his instinct theories, though he certainly utilized them in his clinical work. But there is an implicit assumption in much dynamic psychiatry today that "man's nature, his passions, and anxieties are a cultural product."<sup>14</sup> Now if such a view means that it is in the interpersonal relations of culture that man experiences *anxiety* and *security*, this cannot be denied. But if by "cultural product" it is meant that the culture determines man's nature, as well as providing the opportunity for its expression and molding, it would seem that a new mechanism has replaced the old. Certainly, anxiety is affected by the cultural setting, but its deep-seated character goes beyond the determination of it by cultural manipulation.

For these reasons, it would seem that actually Freud's second theory of anxiety, which relates to the trauma of birth, is more profound than the views of those critics that retain the weakness of his mechanistic approach when they substitute culture for the sex instinct. Rank pointed the way to a solution with his theory of birth trauma. The traumatic feelings that accompany birth, according to his theory, remain operative throughout life, sometimes as a fear of life, again as a fear of death. Indeed, Rank believed that the fear of birth anticipates the fear of death, and that together these fears pervade life. Freud, while rejecting some elements of Rank's theory, held, nevertheless, that the anxiety associated with birth, by virtue of the helplessness of the infant, is a proto-type of the inescapable helplessness of existence itself, and thus a picture of anxiety in later life. But Freud went further. In his characteristic manner he assumed that

<sup>14</sup> Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, p. 13.

man veils the self-destructive impulse that arises from this helplessness in an aggressive drive against others.

For the Christian view of man, it would seem significant that anxiety is related to the helplessness of the infant at birth. Here is a moment when cultural factors are reduced to a minimum and the elemental factors of birth are universally applicable. It is true, of course, that the primal anxiety of life is intensified or reduced by the cultural and personal ways in which the child is treated after birth. A permissive Okinawan mother, who never allows herself to be separated from her child, produces a less anxious child than an "enlightened," but exacting, western mother, who gives over her child to a rigid and antiseptically sterile nursery. But this does not mean necessarily that the shock of birth and the anxiety of the infant at this moment is any different in one case than in the other. The elemental fact of anxiety corresponds to the elemental experience of birth, and both are inescapably involved in existence itself.

There seems to be a great deal of merit in the suggestion of Rank that the protective experience of the child before birth exercises great symbolic influence throughout life. The importance of the cult of The Blessed Mother in every major religion appears to be related to a deeply felt human need to secure again the experience of wholeness in the womb. In a striking passage in his book, *The Agony of Christianity*, Miguel de Unamuno tells of visiting, on St. Bernard's day in 1922, a Trappist monastery and of arriving during the singing of the impressive chant to Our Lady. He calls the chant a "cradle song" for disbirth, and he describes the monks as "surging backward, returning to infancy, gentle infancy, finding again on their lips the celestial taste of maternal milk," slipping back "to the sleep of the unborn."

#### SUMMARY

In his own heroic way Dietrich Bonhoeffer struggled, during the months just prior to his execution by the Nazis,

with the question that has been the theme of this chapter. Out of that struggle came a prayer the conclusion of which was:

Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.

Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am Thine! <sup>15</sup>

The crisis of existence is made concrete whenever man confronts that question. For therein man is faced with the inescapable choice between the alternatives: Either to rebel against the Godgivenness of his own being and anxiously to strive to purchase another self in pride, or to live by faith and trust in God. There is no magic word whereby to escape the threat of anxiety, but there is a confidence that comes of knowing Him, who has pierced the darkness from the other side.

<sup>15</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, trans. R. M. Fuller (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951), p. 15.

## MAN AS SINNER

When William of Sens, the prideful craftsman in “The Zeal of Thy House,” finds himself at death’s door and protests that his only sins—those of the flesh—have already been confessed, the archangel Michael confronts him:

“There where thy treasure is  
Thy heart is also. Sin is of the heart.”

“But,” William objects, “all my heart was in my work.”  
“Even so,” Michael replied.<sup>1</sup>

The blindness of William in thinking that his own involvement in sin went no deeper than an occasional yielding to the flesh, although his pride was magnified in his work, dramatically portrays the way sin masks its role in man’s life. Pride eludes scrutiny by shifting the emphasis from what one *is* to what one *does*, as Christ demonstrated in His parable of the Pharisee. Man is a sinner; and sin is of the heart. As long as one thinks only of what he does or can do, clothing his own actions with praiseworthy motives, he avoids the necessity of facing the deepest knowledge of himself. The New Testament states the matter with unmistakable clarity:

If we say we have no sin,  
We deceive ourselves,  
And the truth is not in us (John 1:8).

<sup>1</sup> Dorothy Sayers, “The Zeal of Thy House” in *The Questing Spirit*, eds. Halford Luccock and Frances Brentano (New York: Coward-McCann, 1947), p. 503. Used by permission of Miss Sayers.

In the previous chapter we presented the biblical view of man's creaturehood. We found his life to be a curious paradox, reflecting both the goodness of God's creation and the evil that is made manifest in actuality. For anxiety is the mark of finite freedom; and the fall of man accompanies his leap into existence. The primal anxiety, which is present in innocence, is translated into tragic anxiety and guilt. Spontaneous harmony is replaced by compulsive activity. Man has become a sinner, for sin is the act of turning away from the essential harmony with God under the threat of anxiety. It involves separation from the ground of existence, and surrender of the self to the tyranny of sin. It is sin because, ideally, faith could still the anxiety of existence by holding fast to the essential unity of man with God. Actually, as we pointed out in our discussion of the Genesis story of the fall, anxiety and sin are present before man is even aware that he has lost that innocence.

There are striking similarities between this classical Christian view of man's condition and some contemporary views of man put forth by humanistic psychology. Fromm, for example, develops the thesis that man experiences anxiety as he emerges from an original oneness with man and nature to the realization of his own freedom. In this anxiety he attempts to escape from his freedom by giving it over to new authorities. At this point, it is held, man's only alternative to his enslavement by this anxiety is to unite himself again with man and nature on a higher level, the level of spontaneous love and creative work. The Christian view, also, regards freedom as an occasion of anxiety, for it bears the possibility of peril, as well as of promise. Here, too, the solution is through a re-establishment of harmony, but in terms of faith. The similarity of these views, however, ends here; they cannot be equated. For the former attempts to explain man's anxiety as the product of his conditioning, which, since man is primarily a rational creature, may be eventually resolved by a new and more adequate under-

standing. The latter looks upon anxiety as an inevitable component of man's freedom, which has been destroyed from within by man's own act of separating himself from God. His freedom will be restored, and his anxiety resolved, not by anything he can do, but by his responding in love through faith to what God has done in Christ. The one view is called scientific (although its assumptions appear to have ultimate or religious significance), because it follows the discipline of science and works from the proposition that man's condition may be attributed to eventually controllable factors, such as historical and cultural circumstance. The other view is a frankly religious outlook that sees in the crisis of freedom and anxiety an enduring threat through which all men must live, regardless of the accidents of their historical condition. Moreover, the Christian holds that man is deeply wounded by his own separation in sin and that his health requires more than treatment for his maladjustment. Man as sinner is *sick unto death*. He will be healed only by that which, beyond the brokenness and lostness of his existence, restores him to a living relation to God. It is in this view of man as sinner, that Christian faith charts the tragic consequences of man's fall under the temptation of anxiety.

#### SIN AND AMBIGUITY

The origin of sin is inextricably bound up with the ambiguity of man's relation to himself and to his world. In self-consciousness he is able to observe himself somewhat objectively and to assess the world in which he lives. He is free, in some ways, of both and yet he is bound to each. He is unique in that he can look beyond himself; yet he remains a child of his own time and circumstance. Essentially, he participates in and possesses the innocence of God's good creation, but actually, his existence is marked by sin and guilt. So long as his innocence remains and he retains the harmony of his being, sin and guilt are not manifest in him; but at the moment the possibility of actualizing his

freedom presents itself, his primal anxiety is transformed into tragic anxiety, and he is prompted to sin. As Professor David Roberts of Union Seminary has pointed out in a paraphrase of Kierkegaard, a prohibition, such as that in the Genesis story of the fall, "merely induces dread because it awakens the possibility of freedom—a being able to do what, whether good or evil, he [man] does not yet know."<sup>2</sup>

Sin accompanies the act of taking over one's own freedom. It is an act propelled by anxiety, but the resulting sin is more than a simple equivalent of the primary drive. Anxiety is the condition, the spiritual climate, that nurtures sin. But it is a mistake to apply causal connections here. Indeed, the social scientist who "explains" the sinful behavior of man merely by disclosing the occasions of anxious strain is guilty of disregarding the freedom of man. For man has the freedom to transform the occasions of sin—occasions that are not necessarily sinful in themselves—into compulsive anxiety. Indeed, at the heart of man's sin is rebellion against the necessity of decision in freedom. Man rejects the givenness of his humanity, since it involves freedom and requires a response for realization; he flees from his manhood and envies the animal. It is this rebellion—and not the anxiety that is concomitant with freedom—that produces a twisted humanity, whose lost purpose is evident in

Ears that hear not,  
Eyes that see not,  
Tongues that speak not  
The glory of God made manifest!

Man is more than an object determined by outside forces. His capacity for freedom and choice together with his memory and his ability to anticipate consequences is evidence that he is not simply bound to the law of nature. Yet man is a dependent creature. The same factors that are

<sup>2</sup> David Roberts, "The Concept of Dread: A Review Article," *Review of Religion*, XI, 3, 276.

necessary to the life of other animals—air, food, water, etc.—are necessary conditions for his life, also. And his days, like those of the other animals, are numbered. Man is dependent, however, in a deeper sense. He cannot fulfill his life simply by existing. He is dependent upon community and the ability to communicate with others, and upon the experience of communion at every level of his existence. He needs more than himself to complete himself; but, as we have seen, his great temptation is to throw the whole justification for his existence outside himself. Man is a creature that must constantly repent, in his self-inflicted solitude, for the violence he has done to his necessary relation to others and to God. He can neither “go it alone,” nor “sign over” his freedom, although anxiety tempts him and sin propels him in both directions. He must find the fulfillment of his freedom and selfhood in the acceptance of his dependency and in the exercise of his freedom in relation to God. This basic ambiguity together with its consequences in terms of man’s fall, sin, and redemption is a crucial element in the Christian view of man.

#### ORIGINAL SIN

Man’s original and continuing sin is that he has “exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever!” (Romans 1:25). To be a sinner is not only to separate oneself from God, but also to worship a false god and, ultimately, to worship and serve a thinly disguised image of the self. Sin is more than self-centeredness or egotism. It is rebellion against God and worship of the self. Man cannot be indifferent to God. He either worships God and accepts dependence on Him, or he defies God and worships himself. It is in this sense that Christ, the revelation of God, becomes a scandal to every man who is in sin. For in that crucial encounter man is judged, and his idolatry revealed.

The Christian doctrine of original sin has been of genuine service to man in his understanding of himself. It is "good news" to those whose struggle in sin leaves them bewildered about moral failure. There is democracy in its inclusiveness. For not only those who "sin," not alone the "sinful," but *all* men are sinners. That truth speaks to the deepest truth in every heart. It is significant that the doctrine of the fall and of sin, implicit in the Genesis account, is an afterthought, a sign that man was growing increasingly conscious of the fact that human existence is contradictory. The doctrine itself reflects this growing consciousness in the fact that the fall is not simultaneous with creation. There is a paradise and an expulsion from it; and man, in reflection, "remembers" his created goodness and harmony by contrasting it with his present broken existence. Thus the Christian doctrine affirms the goodness of creation of which man is a part and faces up to the fact that created harmony is lost in the fall. The Greek dichotomy between flesh and spirit is avoided, because, whether in his essential or existential condition, Christian man acts, not through a part, but through the totality of his being. He cannot be understood simply in terms of flesh or spirit. Accordingly, the Christian asserts that the depth of man's sin is more profound in this view than it would be in a view that attributed it to the remaining vestiges of "ignorance" or to the "primitiveness" in man.

Like every human concept, "original sin" has been used in the service of other prevailing ideas. A literal interpretation of the biblical story and an enthusiasm for causal connection has twisted it, in many cases, to mean that the sin of Adam has been inherited from generation to generation. This mechanical view has been the subject of countless theological controversies in the Christian Church and, we would suspect, an issue of great concern to many "troubled consciences" today. Without going into the controversy, we may say that a good company of Christian thinkers today

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regard sin as *original* only in the sense that Adam was both himself and the human race, and became, therefore, the bearer of that solidarity that the ancient world knew. In this view it is held that, as a symbol, "original sin" represents what actually happens in the experience of every man. Kierkegaard has pointed out that the Greek Church calls original sin "the sins of the fathers," a characterization that can refer only to a historically concluded fact, but leaves room for the understanding of sin as a condition arising directly in each individual.

Sin is rooted in man's finite freedom, as we concluded in the previous chapter. In the possibility of freedom man succumbs to anxiety and becomes guilty. But guilt does not come as a necessity; it can arise only in the case of a man that is free in his essential nature. Man incurs guilt precisely because he is free to sin. Here is one of the unresolved paradoxes of Christianity, for it postulates that man remains responsible even while he is driven to sin in existence. On this problem of sin and man's responsibility, Reinhold Niebuhr writes:

The actual sin is the consequence of the temptation of anxiety in which all life stands. But anxiety alone is neither actual nor original sin. Sin does not flow necessarily from it. Consequently the bias toward sin from which actual sin flows is anxiety plus sin. Or in the words of Kierkegaard, sin presupposes itself. Man could not be tempted if he had not already sinned.<sup>3</sup>

### SIN AND GUILT

Man becomes guilty, but not by necessity. His guilt is evidence that in the fall man does not cease to be man. His freedom and creativity remain, even during his servitude to sin. They are changed, however, by the tragic anxiety of

<sup>3</sup>Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), I, 250. Used by permission of the publisher.

existence into something less than the spontaneous freedom and creativity of God's creation. And in moments that are free of all pretense man knows the loss of that spontaneity; his life becomes burdensome. But in that he knows his loss, man exercises the essential nature that is his.

In *Will Therapy*, Otto Rank has developed the thesis that "creative guilt" arises from the fact of a creative God, and he cites this development as especially characteristic of western culture. In this view creative guilt can only be atoned for through new creation. But here is the precise point of difficulty for man. His anxiety restricts his creativity to fleeting moments that are conspicuous by their contrast to the rest of his harassed existence. He cannot be creative without, at the same time, being anxious. The weight of guilt and its unfailing component, hostility, press heavily upon the conscience of modern man, and his *unfulfilled creativity* becomes another factor limiting his existence. Jeremiah voiced a lament that speaks for many in every age: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jeremiah 8:20).

Thus guilt is planted as deep as anxiety. Granted that guilt takes on the character of internalized authority and that man seldom consciously selects the real object of his guilt feeling, it still must be maintained that any view that reduces guilt entirely to unreal, internal reflections is hardly in accord with the real and tragic character of human existence. The Christian doctrine of sin has avoided a fatal determinism, by insisting that man is both responsible and guilty, and that his guilt must be dealt with realistically, since it cannot be resolved simply by explaining it.

The Christian distinguishes between real guilt and "guilt feelings." For the latter belong to the area of pathology and must be dealt with as psychic injuries. "Guilt feelings" are neurotic distortions of one's actual responsibility, distortions that spring from illusion and fear. A child who is too often reminded that "Mother knows best" may later

feel unnecessarily guilty every time he acts in terms of his own rightful interest. Real guilt, on the other hand, is an inevitable component of man's relation to man. It is that deep awareness—innermost in every self—that we have been tried and found wanting. It serves to remind man not only that he is a creature who makes decisions, but that he must stand under judgment for the use he makes of that freedom. The ultimate picture of guilt is one of personal responsibility before the holiness of God. For an Isaiah, that experience evoked an expression of guilt and repentance that could hardly be dismissed as "guilt feelings":

Woe is me! For I am lost;  
for I am a man of unclean lips,  
And I dwell in the midst of a people of  
unclean lips . . . (Isaiah 6:5).

Christian theology and some contemporary views in psychology are at variance in this matter of dealing with sin and guilt. This is not surprising when one considers their different approaches to human problems. Even if it could be granted that "neurosis" and "sin" refer to the same set of facts, the theologian measures sin against the absolute claims of God, whereas the psychologist regards neurosis in the light of the culture in which the individual lives. But the psychologist who takes into account the cultural and individual aspects of guilt feelings often has tended to reduce them to neurotic manifestations. Although the Christian view of guilt has been sharpened and made more precise by these insights from clinical psychology, it still affirms the reality of guilt. In this view the experience of guilt is not necessarily a sign of neurosis. Rather it is a profound demonstration of the fact that man knows, and cannot escape, something of his own responsibility in freedom.

The relation of theology and psychology becomes even more complex when we consider their practical roles. At

first sight those roles seem to be clearly distinctive. The Christian treatment of sin and guilt is guided by the doctrine of man's alienation from God, as symbolized in the fall and original sin. Psychology, on the other hand, deals with the difficulties man suffers in his interpersonal relations and the compulsive anxiety that denies him the satisfactions of living. The goal of Christian salvation is the restoration of man to God, a restoration which heals man in every relation. The goal of therapy is the renewal and rediscovery of the self in interpersonal terms. Thus far, there would seem to be no conflict between the two views, inasmuch as they are dealing with man in different aspects of his being. Indeed, there are those who insist that this simple distinction be maintained in therapy and in pastoral work. Some Roman Catholic writers take this view, when distinguishing between the manner of handling guilt in analysis and its treatment in confession.<sup>4</sup> They define sin as *malum culpeae*, the evil men do, conceived in a voluntary sense, and neurosis as a *malum poenae*, an evil men suffer or undergo. The compulsive aspect of neurosis is stressed in contrast to the voluntary nature of sin.

Such theoretical distinctions may be helpful in making clear the different approaches to the problem of sin and neurosis, but actually both voluntary and involuntary action are involved in the human situation; and neither may be isolated and treated independently, as these definitions seem to imply. The psychologist may find it necessary to deal with religious matters, and the confessor certainly must be aware of neurotic tendencies if he is to be of real service. From the point of view of Christian faith the multiplication of guilt and hostility in man's life can be dealt with only by a view that brings healing not only in interpersonal relations, but also in the relation to the ground of existence—to God.

<sup>4</sup> See Victor White, "The Analyst and the Confessor," *The Commonweal*, XLVIII (1948), 348-49.

Within the context of this understanding, therapy may proceed to correct neurotic guilt and, also, to heal the deepest source of man's guilt.

The deepest source of man's guilt is the awareness of his distance from God—the shattering experience of knowing both dependence on God and judgment by Him. Without that relationship to God, the distortions in guilt feelings to which psychologists point are abundantly present. The secular world cannot confess its guilt because it recognizes neither the judgment of God nor His mercy in forgiveness. It knows only, what the Bible calls, "the wrath of God." Faith provides the clue that turns the experience of guilt into an occasion of returning and rest in God. In the final analysis the resolution of man's guilt is possible only within the realm of repentance, grace, and forgiveness.

#### SOME ASPECTS OF MAN AS SINNER

Sin is more than moral inconsistency, more than a failure to be true to one's highest standards. It is an infection that attacks the roots of human action. In sin man succumbs, in the depths of his being, to inordinate pride. He loses that which he is in the fullness of creation, and becomes that which he is in separation: a slave to sin. The work of original sin is so deeply planted in the human race that this alien slavery has lost its foreign aspect. Its spiritual climate has become as familiar and as seemingly harmless as the words of the child's spelling exercise:

In Adam's fall  
We sinnéd all.

Man's slavery to sin, a running theme of the Bible, envelops and hampers his right choices. This is something that sentimental moralists will never learn. Their emphasis upon the formula, "You can do it if you try hard enough," fails to discern the persistent pride in man's heart, the rank

slavery to sin that all too often motivates such efforts. T. S. Eliot's prayer is relevant:

O Lord deliver me from the man of excellent  
Intention and impure heart . . .<sup>5</sup>

A glance at the references to sin in the Bible can hardly escape giving one the impression that the crucial concern with sin is not its missing the mark ethically, important as that is, but the spread and dominance of sin over man's life. The Bible wastes little time on ethical refinements, but it is vitally concerned with the ultimate commitments of man's life, whether they be to sin or to God. This emphasis on the power of sin is made emphatic in the Lord's words to Cain after he had angrily defied the Creator:

If you do well, will you not be accepted?  
And if you do not well, sin is couching at the door;  
its desire is for you, but you must master it (Genesis  
4:7).

These words bring us back to the paradox of sin and guilt. In sin man becomes the slave of sin. He strives to hide his sin in vain platitudes while, at the same time, he may plead helplessness before its power. Yet even though man alone is incapable of good works, at the deepest level he is responsible for his behavior. Sin desires him, but he must master it. No man escapes the temptations of anxiety. Every man has reason to worry about the acceptance of his gift. The really crucial matter is whether or not he has succumbed to the temptation of anxiety in his heart. The driving force behind man's servitude to sin is anxiety. The lash of that whip remains an ever present threat. It may become associated with specific fears, such as the fear of meeting other people, or the fear of decision, or the fear of death. But it

<sup>5</sup>T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), p. 105. Used by permission of the publisher.

continues as a pervasive threat beyond every occasion of fear. For the Hebrews, en route to freedom from the tyranny of Pharaoh, the subversive power of anxiety found its mark in the pain of their cry:

. . . It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness (Exodus 14:12).

That is the cry of an old slavery that is forever finding new expression in man's life. It is the enemy of his freedom, and it eludes all efforts to track it down. Even so, in troubled dreams and in days filled with exacerbated wakefulness, man experiences the full weight and wearing pain of this psychic cramp! As one person said ironically, on being informed that he talked in a disturbed manner while asleep, "I don't dream, but I must have something to talk about." That "something" of anxiety finds ways of expressing itself. It forces much human behavior into meaningless channels, meaningless except in the sense that these channels serve to prevent the individual from facing his real motives. Anxiety is the climate for sin. It undermines the effort to achieve genuine selfhood, by emphasizing the pain of freedom. But that unrealized selfhood—that death in the midst of life—leaves man further isolated and cut off from God and man. This loneliness is the deepest pain. Thus man, as sinner, is blinded by the very power of the sin that holds him in its grasp. This is slavery, the curse of sin.

#### SIN AS SELF-WORSHIP

For biblical religion the perennial sin of man is false worship. It is hardly an accident that the first two commandments not only deal with false worship, but actually proscribe the worship of images. The secret behind every image is that it is made and manipulated by man himself. Whether in disguise or in open defiance of God, self-worship is at the heart of every false worship.

When man rejects his creaturely relation to God, he

comes more and more to depend on “self-made” gods. The “images” that modern man worships may be more sophisticated than the golden calf or the idols of the ancient world, but for that very reason they are more dangerous. The modern idolatries may take forms that seem innocent and praiseworthy enough—patriotism, social reform, and personal disciplines among a host of others, but pride, in many cases, rots at the core the fruit of these endeavors. The heart of genuine patriotism, like that which breathed in Abraham Lincoln, does not shun judgment, but rather welcomes it in the prayer that “this nation under God may have a new birth of freedom.” In contrast stand the men of Moscow, who, like the self-appointed masters of conscience in America, seem to have hit upon the success formula: he who shouts loudest, claims most, and answers to no one shall win the most adherents! But God is not mocked. Nor shall His people be long impressed with brazen idolatry. After all, there is a sequel to one of our often quoted texts where doing the will of the Father is preferred over pious words:

On that day many will say to me,

“Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?”

And then will I declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers” (Matthew 7:22-23).

No number of loud claims or of impressive “works” shall be able to hide the fact that it is through these means that men worship themselves.

The disciplines of personal religion have multiplied in this age of anxiety. In many quarters this has been taken to signify a revival of religion. There can be little doubt that, for the first time in many decades, men are asking the questions that call for the answers of faith. But it is also true that this disturbed questioning is being exploited by some who, with ready-made answers, promise the recipient the power

to control the Divine! The tragedy of much of the "self-help" literature of this age is that it covers with a thin veneer the treacherous break-throughs in man's inner-life, which, if taken more seriously as opportunities for self-knowledge, could lead to profound renewal rather than to bitter frustration. For all its confidence, Christianity is not a grand detour around suffering, but a highway through the "valley" and the "shadow" to the presence of God. Popular religion, on the other hand, can sometimes be a refined version of man's persistent idolatry.

Anxiety lies behind man's worship of himself. His independence from God never seems to be clearly established. He is constantly engaged in the effort of trying to prove himself, in insisting that he is the captain of his own soul. But to use a word from psychology, he *dissociates* every bit of evidence, coming his way, that indicates that his existence is dependent upon God. His own insecurity is laid bare in that constant protestation of independence. He "protests too much," listing his virtues like another Job, yet all the while desiring to see the "book" in which the Almighty has written the real facts. Beneath his arrogance and self-worship man is betrayed by an anxiety that constantly reveals his insecurity.

#### SIN AS SELF-HATRED

The paradox of man's sinfulness is that this sinfulness is a self-worship that is at the same time a self-hatred. Under the threat of anxiety man rejects both his dependence upon God and the self that God has given him. Selfishness, as opposed to genuine self-love and self-respect under God, is grounded in man's unwillingness to accept himself. In pride, a man will measure himself defiantly against God, while at the same time he sees himself through his proud imagination, not as he actually is, but as his vanity wishes him to appear. Here is the driving force behind the tyranny of the "should" and the moral "oughtness" that is so much a part

of our common life. Even the gifts of faith, such as the virtues described in the Sermon on the Mount, can be transformed into demonic forces when they are sought apart from faith. Many a Christian, as an imitator of Christ, has undermined his own witness when he has permitted himself to forget that "these things" described in the Beatitudes are added only when one seeks "first His Kingdom and His righteousness." (The whole of St. Matthew's text is relevant here.) The claims of Christ are intended for those who know His love; but the constant anxiety to appear always "in the right," and the oppressive use of righteousness as a means of controlling others can hardly be classified as expressions of answering love. Behind this misuse of the goals of Christian living lies an inner betrayal: a profound distrust of one's own acceptableness and a constant need to prove one's worth. Self-hatred, as well as self-worship, resides at the core of man's sin.

The fact that human existence is weighted with man's tragic self-hatred is daily confirmed in the experience of every counselor. The excess of anger that finds expression in personal and social life has become the concern of many students of human behavior. Karl Menninger, the psychiatrist, writes: "There is everything to make us believe that man's chief fears are not of the immensity of the universe but of the malignity of his own aggressive instincts."<sup>6</sup> Certainly, there is much evidence to lead us to agree that hostility is a widespread and overwhelming fact in our common life, hostility that can be turned against the world or against the self with equal force. It is the inevitable component of unresolved anxiety. Man's anger in his insecurity underlies his self-contempt, as well as his self-glorification. Anxiety determines his total attitude toward himself and the world. Its ready conversion into hostility is manifested in the familiar tensions and bitterness of modern life. We should

<sup>6</sup> Karl Menninger, *Love Against Hate* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1943), p. 190.

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be reminded, however, that angry aggressiveness is not a phenomenon peculiar to modern man. St. Paul was sufficiently familiar with its appearance to describe man as being "full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, [and] they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God . . . foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless" (Romans 1:29-30).

It would seem to us that any attempt to locate the root of sin exclusively in either self-hatred or inordinate self-love is to overlook the fact that both attitudes are consequences of man's separation from God. That separation from God under the threat of anxiety together with the resulting false worship is the root of sin. Both self-glorification and self-contempt do violence to man's given relation with God. Both are intensified by the anxiety that man feels; and as psychiatry has amply demonstrated, these ambivalent attitudes may exist in the same person at the same time. The resulting contradictory behavior is a picture of sin: it is a false worship that alternates between self-worship and self-hatred.

### CORPORATE SIN

Man as sinner always lives in the community of sin in proximity to other sinners. The fact of corporate sin and its tendency to perpetuate itself in communal life becomes more significant for every one of us when we remember that it is within the intimate family life that community for the child begins. Here his character is shaped, and much depends upon the emotional stability and moral health of the parental figures. It is here that a frustrated and hostility-ridden mother or surrogate can wield a devastating influence on the growth and health of a child under her care. Thus the sin of one generation is inflicted upon another, and insecurity is perpetuated. A father who will not accept his son sets the stage for that son's desperate effort to find the love and support that has been denied him in ways that may involve him in great pain and further sin.

The view that we hold here is that community and interpersonal involvement in sin does not explain anything more than the occasion of its continuance. There can be no doubt that every person is shaped in large measure by the environment in which he lives. But that environment, particularly in its spiritual and emotional aspects, is constantly being altered by the decisions made by man. In the Christian view, the crucial temptation of anxiety inevitably confronts the solitary individual. He cannot escape that decision. But in his capitulation to sin, he extends the reign of sin in corporate life. The parent, whose consuming desire is to "keep the peace" and avoid conflict and who, therefore, succumbs to the temptation to manage and to insulate his or her children, may discover too late that the withheld gift of genuine relationship has destroyed the family from within. Thus, every interpersonal relation provides the opportunity of one person's use of another to relieve his own anxiety and to perpetuate sin.

The role of sin in the mass movements of modern history can hardly be overlooked. The apparently successful collectivist societies, whose remarkable unity and power seems to be achieved at the cost of "dead-level" conformity, are motivated by a common idolatry; and the result has been disastrous not only for those that have been enslaved by the totalitarians but also for those that have been the victims of their brutal "brain-washing" techniques. The fact that strong men have been broken under the weight of that terror may prompt a reappraisal of our own uncertain faith. But the strength of totalitarianism may also prove to be its weakness. When man becomes an automaton, he is bereft of his humanity and of the will to adapt freely to new situations. In the Christian understanding of history, civilizations rise and fall according to the way in which they manage the corruptions of pride within themselves. When a Russian farm manager refuses to harvest sugar beets in the

middle of a food famine because the yield would be greater than his "estimate," the seeds of destruction seem to have produced their flower within that nation.<sup>7</sup>

In every case of anxiety described in this study, sin and community involvement have been closely associated. Although we do not hold that there is a mechanical relation between the two, we have pointed out frequently that it is in interpersonal relations that the child learns the patterns of response and relates himself to the world. As Sullivan has observed, the child's patterns of behavior, even of neurotic behavior, are the tools which he uses in getting along with the world. These tools are power mechanisms, whether they be loud cries or passive behavior.

As an illustration of community involvement in an aggressive orientation, here is the case of Norma, who comes to the counselor because she is having difficulty in getting along with her friends. They think that she is too bold, and they "gang up on her." Further investigation reveals that Norma is aggressive and tends to be hostile and suspicious in her relations with women. Significantly, her mother is an extremely hostile woman, who attacks the girl in the presence of other people, prefers her male children to Norma, and boasts that she is much prettier than her daughter. In such a situation one can imagine that Norma learned to fight for herself early in life; her compulsive hostility now remains a problem even in her normal relations with girl friends. In every relationship she unconsciously applies the formula that "worked" in her relation to her mother; but that formula is unnecessary now and is challenged by her compeers. Her compulsive continuance of this attitude threatens to isolate her and to deny her the satisfactions of genuine companionship. Her problem is complicated by the fact that it seems easier to fight than to

<sup>7</sup> See Helmut Gollwitzer, *Unwilling Journey—A Diary from Russia* (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1953). The whole of this remarkable account of a German chaplain who was a slave laborer in Russia is worth study for a practical Christian understanding of Communism at work.

relate in a world in which so many people are "fighting mad."

Another relatively young woman comes to the counselor with the problem of her broken marriage. Her husband has been involved with another woman and a child is expected. She blames herself because she has failed to produce a child. But the husband has been involved with other women several times before, and even now he is more concerned about the pregnant woman than he is about his wife's needs. She accepts this, or seems to, and feels called upon to defend him. She is "ready to do what he wants," although this had previously involved taking care of another woman, pregnant by him; and it now means giving him a quick divorce.

It would seem that the counselee's own desires never reach direct expression; and even now, as she faces the loss of her husband whom she loves, she is unable to do otherwise than as someone else wants. Her attitude reaches back to childhood when she was constantly compared unfavorably to her brother by her mother, who used to assure her that she would not "get by on her looks." The counselee's complete attitude reflects a passive compliance. This compliance certainly was a factor in her unsatisfactory marriage adjustment and will continue to limit her mature human relationships until resolved. The tenacity of that compliance can be understood only when it is recognized that this is her way of controlling others.

Therapy in both of these cases would eventually include an understanding of the relevance of the behavior pattern (hostile or compliant) in the early situation, and of the ways in which it has been carried over into adult life. One would hope that the outcome of such therapy would be not only an ability to accept and enjoy relations with other people as they really are, but also some awareness of how these habitual ways of relating to others represent the means of sinful control of them. These cases illustrate how in-

timately associated sin and power mechanisms may become in the actual process of living. The behavior pattern in each case is "explained" in terms of an earlier necessary adjustment; and yet the very condition that made these adjustments necessary in the first place points to an unresolved primal anxiety that provides the soil for the growth of compulsive anxiety. In existence, anxiety, like other slave masters, cannot be appeased. It must be resolved in faith, as well as understood and corrected in its behavior manifestations. Here, then, the task of therapy and religion would be combined: the one striving to reduce the exaggeration of compulsive anxiety, and the other bringing reconciliation in the depths of the soul.

Without that reconciliation the insecure self must constantly seek assurances of its own power and importance in a compulsive struggle against doubt and anxiety. It must seek to hide and repress its ultimate helplessness under a cloak of dogmatic assertiveness or habitual desperation, attitudes which grow daily in the service of spiritual arrogance. War, injustice, and prejudice become the bearers of this accumulating sin in community life. Man's conflict with his neighbor stems from that ultimate unresolved conflict within himself and before God. Those who would make little of the ultimate healing that is needed must stand under the judgment of Jeremiah,

They have healed the wound of my people lightly,  
saying, "Peace, Peace,"  
when there is no peace (Jeremiah 6:14).

Indeed, the prophets had rightly concluded that there is an intimate and direct connection between social injustice and the inordinate concern for one's own security.

#### SIN AND ANXIETY

The fact is that without release from anxiety in the depths of his being, man is consumed, either in pride or

contempt, with self-concern. He is "so concerned about himself that he cannot release himself for the adventure of love."<sup>8</sup> Without God man's primary concern is to secure himself against the anxious dread that dwells in his heart, a dread that Kierkegaard described as "so hidden in a man that he himself does not know it." Still it drives him on and attaches itself to specific objects in his human relations. Bodily functions, such as sex or eating, become the bearers of this anxiety when their natural and wholesome functions are made to serve its compelling drive for security. Drunkenness and other ways of escape give the illusion of peace regained. One's relations with one's self or with others come to serve the desperate purpose of proving that one is not quite so insecure as he feels in the dark moments of his life. There is little wonder that man constantly seeks release from the tension of life or that he continues to flee down the "labyrinthine ways," further and further away from his genuine selfhood and God, for in primal anxiety he has turned away from the source of his unity and peace. This turning away from God is sin, and it carries in its wake frustration, constant self-laceration, and a sense of helpless guilt.

Thus, basically, sin is the unwillingness to be one's self as a child of God, or in the formulation that Kierkegaard used, sin is despair of willing to be one's self. In sin anxiety becomes the compelling force of life, and the self becomes rigid. Obsessive patterns are repeated with maddening regularity, while the self is at the mercy of outward circumstance. The actual issues of life, whether outward or inward, are merely the screens on which the deeper struggle with anxiety is projected. Man the sinner is a closed-off, isolated self who struggles to reduce life to simple rules that can be applied without committing the whole self. Perhaps this is the secret of religion's ageless struggle against legalism. For the latter, in its excessive variety, represents man's

<sup>8</sup> Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, I, 272.

effort to ground his security in legal definitions that, by their rigidity, betray an underlying insecurity. St. Paul seems to have understood the danger of such a view when he wrote that when he "delighted in the law," he saw another law in his innermost self, "making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members" (Romans 8:23). Man's sin drives him to seek security in rules and to hope for salvation in endless activity. His peace, says Christian faith, lies in "returning and rest" before God.

The Christian community is not exempt from the debilitating struggle with anxiety, and delight in the law has been one of its recurring problems. It is a fact of tragic consequence that the Christian Church itself has too often become the expression of "dead-level conformity," which has rendered it unable to deal with present moral problems, whether they be individual or social. Law, rather than liberty, has frequently characterized the New Covenant. Legal rules which define that which is permissible rather than that which is morally relevant, have been the content of some moral theology. A practical result has been an emphasis on various sins rather than on the inner disruption of the whole personality in sin. The Jesuit, J. J. Slater, speaks for a wide segment of the Church, inside and outside of Rome, on the handling of the excessively scrupulous person whose groundless fear causes him to confess things that are not sinful. The writer advises the confessor to tell the over-scrupulous person "to act boldly and fearlessly, that he may do whatever is not obviously forbidden, and that it is impossible for one who wishes to serve God to commit sin, especially grave sin, without being aware of it."<sup>8</sup> Now certainly such advice is good for those who can make use of it; but when driving anxiety stands back of the "scrupulous" ritual, the absolution of the Church without the advice (unless it is to go deeper) will possibly help more. And

<sup>8</sup> J. J. Slater, *Manual of Moral Theology* (New York: Benziger Bros., 1909), I, 79.

the concern of the confessor with symptoms and legally defined sins leaves much to be done before the absolution of the Church can meet and resolve the anxiety that lies back of both.

The tendency of some moral theologians to apply Thomistic formulations to modern moral problems results in questionable advice for moral health. Harton, in his *The Elements of the Spiritual Life*, seems to lack a dynamic understanding of the relation of human behavior to underlying anxiety. In one section he warns against the "danger and fact of concupiscent imaginings," calling it particularly to the attention of those in charge of children because "here the habit of day-dreaming most often begins." He adds:

The practice of day-dreaming is dangerous for this reason (the imagination is impatient of control). Day-dreams practically always center around self, and, it is easy for the Devil to slip in his temptations for its ruin. It should be realized that the imagination is the Devil's point of direct contact with the soul, whence he attacks the mind and the will.<sup>10</sup>

The vision of thought-control nursery teachers arises from such speculations; but we would predict that even they would fail to regulate day-dreams, especially where fantasy outshines reality.

The great mistake of such a view is that it divides the self into artificial segments, when a view of the whole personality is needed. Day-dreams, like other symptoms, are a part of the total personality, and they operate as do other symptoms: to enable the personality to function without more serious disruption. A child who day-dreams excessively has a reason for doing so, and help should come not in the direction of further repression, but in that warm and confidence-giving spirit of Christian love that will draw the

<sup>10</sup> F. P. Harton, *The Elements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1948), p. 118. Used by permission of the publisher.

child into fuller participation in the real things of his life and into honesty and truth about himself. Reality must be made more attractive than fantasy, if moral health is to develop.

Genuine spiritual health for the individual depends not on rules for the regulation of his life, but upon effective dealing with the underlying anxiety that blocks his spiritual development. The very fact that although the Church has the resources to deal with the basic anxiety of existence, its practice can be so easily transformed into rigid rules is proof again of the force of anxiety in man's life. The Church, in the petition of a familiar prayer, stands in constant need of purification from corruption, direction from error and reformation where it is amiss. It must be added that the Church is today not without leaders who are enriching by their studies the field of depth psychology and applying these insights to the fact of man's sin. Indeed, great theology has always been based on a profound psychological understanding of man; Freud and St. Augustine are co-workers in the field of human understanding.

#### SUMMARY

Behind man's sin is the real self, the self that God intended. Despite the slavery of sin, man at heart never gives up the effort to recover unity within himself, with his world, and with God. Even sin may serve a positive purpose if it drives one to seek genuine health and salvation. If, like the prodigal son, man comes to his senses (though he find himself "among the swine"), his salvation has begun. Boisen describes in one paper the case of a patient who, as a boy, was disturbed about the management of the sex drive.<sup>11</sup> His worry forced him to seek help in a religious meeting where Moody was preaching a message of God's forgiveness. The experience set the boy free of self-judg-

<sup>11</sup> Anton T. Boisen, "The Problems of Sin and Salvation in the Light of Psychopathology," *Journal of Religion*, XXII, 3, 288-301.

ment, since he responded to the "good news" of God's judgment and grace. Despite the fact that many problems remained, the boy's health was improved by the overcoming of his isolation in Christian community and of his estrangement from God in the message of forgiveness. As Boisen points out, consciousness of sin was the first step in this individual's salvation. When a man claims even his sin as his *own*, he has turned the corner toward recovered freedom and the outreach of God's love.

Thus far in our study we have attempted to describe the anxiety that motivates man's life and its relation to sin. We have held that both compulsive activity and sin are related to the primal anxiety that man experiences in existence. Compulsive activity, then, is structured by the cultural and interpersonal relations which bear upon the individual, while sin is man's desperate effort to secure himself against the anxiety he feels in isolation and apart from faith in God. In actual life both sin and compulsive activity are intimately associated.

In the remaining chapters, we shall consider what happens when through Christian faith man faces himself in sin and in that primal anxiety that stands back of his sin. In the Christian view man's life is tragic and contradictory because of sin. His wound will not be healed lightly. But then, the Cross and its implications for all men is no light matter, either. In the shadow of that infinite torture every man may see his life as an end and a beginning. As Reinhold Niebuhr has said, "If we can weep for ourselves as men, we need not weep for ourselves as man."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *Beyond Tragedy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. 169.



*Part III*

**TOWARD RESOLVING ANXIETY  
IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**



## MAN IN RECONCILIATION

"There must be something more than this!" These words point to the depth of modern man's disappointment in the life he knows. Somehow, life never seems to "come off." A character in a recent novel, after embezzlement and abandonment of his family, sends a part of his stolen money home as an act of contrition. In his return address, he uses the name, "A. Traveler." Many a man feels that he is a stranger and a sojourner in a world of aliens. For the Christian, the recognition of that alienation from himself, his neighbor, and God is the beginning of life in faith. But the hard fact of separation must be faced as the first act of faith.

Christian faith accepts the fact that man is a sinner. It also knows the tragic character of his sin. When driven by an anxiety that he has failed to resolve in faith or to accept in finitude, man's existence abounds in shattering isolation and contradictory impulses. He is neither happy nor free, an exile from his created harmony, seeking constantly a new Jerusalem to replace his lost paradise. The Christian message is also one of reconciliation. It is a message of man's recovery of health and unity within himself and his world by God's help. And reconciliation begins for man when he faces himself in genuine self-examination.

### FACING THE SELF

In a world that is already organized to prevent people from ever coming face to face with themselves, it is difficult

for the individual to know the real facts about his self. It has been said that, unlike the loss of a limb, the loss of the genuine self can pass quite unnoticed. Man's existence is too often a mad rush to escape this very self. Buried in the unconscious, anxiety covers its dwelling place by making life a "busy" affair and setting a pace that prevents one from ever coming to grips with the real propelling force of his life. Anxiety even robs sleep of its "sweet innocence," for to sleep so often means to dream of trouble in disguised symbols.

It was in dreams, however, that Freud began to see the possibilities of psychoanalysis, thus inaugurating a new era in self-understanding. Throughout the ages men have gained inner awareness by opening their hearts and secret thoughts to themselves, as to God; but today, in the techniques of depth psychology, man possesses new and exciting means for self-understanding. A rigorous honesty is required if one is to face himself, an honesty that must be matched by a faith at least equal to the anxiety that drives him on.

Let it be frankly stated that honesty is no easy matter. For the self under scrutiny, it is like pains of death that came upon the Psalmist in his trouble and heaviness:

The snares of death compassed me round about,  
And the pains of hell gat hold upon me (Psalm 116:3).

Perhaps this is a deeper meaning of the agony and struggle of Calvary: one must be ready for a struggle of this dimension in his battle to recover his God-given self from the servitude of sin. It is certain that pain is associated with the process of recovering self-awareness. The sergeant afflicted with gross tremor, whom we discussed earlier, had to pay a price in worry and agitation before learning the cause of his anxiety and mastering it. Self-searching before God involves the pain of guilt and the terror of eventual judgment that no man escapes. He who would know the

truth about himself must pass over this threshold of deep awareness.

While agonizing struggle is the inevitable cost of self-knowledge, it is in Kierkegaard's phrase "absolutely educational." It reveals the deceptions and flights from reality with which the self "busies" itself; it is a solitary battle like Jacob's struggle in the desert at night. Psychotherapy places much emphasis upon reliving experience. The Christian in prayer, self-examination, and worship gathers up his life again before God in order to remove that which separates him from God. It is necessary in both that one dwell upon the self as it actually is, as well as the self which, in pride, strives to be. All such searching leads back eventually to man's proud imagination and to God's judgment; but that judgment brings "saving health," as does a surgeon's knife, in that it provides the basis of confessing and returning to Him, who gave man being. When face to face with God, man finds reconciliation at the further end of self-searching.

When man confronts himself and God, he must be prepared to bear fully a knowledge of his own sin. Genuine reconciliation demands this. His real motives are laid bare. His self-division and isolation from God and his world are made inescapably apparent. In biblical terms his consuming self-preoccupation (anxious self-concern) is "broken," "shattered," and "crucified" when confronted by the unfailing love of God. In this connection Niebuhr writes:

The self is shattered whenever it is confronted by the power and holiness of God and becomes genuinely conscious of the real source and centre of all life. In Christian faith Christ mediates the confrontation of the self by God; for it is in Christ that the vague sense of the divine, which human life never loses, is crystallized into a revelation of a divine mercy and judgment.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, II, 109. Used by permission of the publisher.

Confession of sin is certainly a part of any religious self-analysis, and a necessary step in the direction of reconciliation. It is significant that Franz Alexander and Thomas M. French, in their book, *Psychoanalytic Therapy*, have described "confession" as a common dynamic mechanism in every therapy; and they cite research which relates the inability to confess to a mother, or a mother-substitute, and the inability to overcome feelings of estrangement with the later appearance of psychogenic asthma attacks. Confession is commonplace in most religions, and though its form and content may vary, its broad function is two-fold: purification, or catharsis, and reconciliation. In this connection, Professor Schneider has commented on the tendency of "civilized" religions to avoid confession of specific sins by confessing sinfulness in general; and this, he insists, moves away from the original health-giving function of confession, making it inevitable that secular "confessions" arise. He adds significantly: "When religious institutions administer opiates, secular institutions must attend to genuine cures."<sup>2</sup>

While some elements of modern Protestantism have abandoned confession as a specific service of the Church and have tended to substitute "general confessions" for individual confession, the whole movement of theology in recent years has been to deal more realistically with the fact of sin. Catholic Christianity has never abandoned the confessional, but neither has it made adjustments in the procedure of that sacramental act which might provide a more profound searching. Even so, the retention of this sacrament in Catholic communities may be counted as evidence of residual health. Paul Tillich has noted that in the predominantly Protestant cultures where the sacraments have tended to lose power, "psychoanalysis has seemed more desirable for educated people than religion."<sup>3</sup> This state-

<sup>2</sup> H. W. Schneider, "Review of *Le Confessione dei peccati* (Vol. III) by Raffaele Pettazzone," *Review of Religion*, I, 1, 50.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 288.

ment sharpens the focus on Professor Schneider's remark. When civilized religions come to ignore the need of every man to find not only an "understanding" of his sin but also forgiveness and restoration in quite specific terms, they can expect secular institutions to take over their work. But the tragedy is deepened in that modern man finds no forgiveness there. The psychotherapist will invite him to understand and to accept himself within the privileged sanctuary of the therapeutic relation. But his deepest separation remains unbridged, apart from confession of sin and God's forgiving action. We would emphasize that what Harry Stack Sullivan's statement about therapy applies equally well to the specific nature of confession: ". . . one has information about one's experience only to the extent that one has tended to communicate it to another—or thought about it in the manner of communicative speech."<sup>4</sup>

Christian experience has signalized in repentance and conversion the crucial moment for turning away from the rigidly striving self to a relaxed trust in God. Conversion may be a dramatic moment, but for the vast majority of Christians it is a series of *returnings* and *rests*, where "quietness and confidence" is the ultimate outcome. A common element in every conversion is that experience of giving up the pride-infested false self for the genuine self as grounded in God. Conversion is a returning movement of the creature to the Creator. It was thus to Brother Lawrence, who attributed his conversion to the sight of a bare tree in winter time and to the reflection that underneath its winter barrenness God preserved a power within, that in the spring would clothe it anew with leaves and blossoms. In conversion man grasps the underlying unity of creation that has been hidden from him in his isolation. Even the barren things of life take on new significance for him in the light of God's unfailing care.

<sup>4</sup> H. S. Sullivan, *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry* (New York: The William Alanson White Foundation, 1946), p. 91.

Fundamentally, self-searching and confession prepare the way for the response of faith—a faith already present in the willingness to search. It must be emphasized that Christian faith requires voluntary self-surrender rather than submission. The term “self-surrender” is used here in the sense of self-release, or letting go, in the conviction that God’s love undergirds all things. Submission would make faith in God another tyranny, while self-surrender opens the way for free and spontaneous meeting with God and with one’s neighbor. The experience of abandonment in conversion does, indeed, bring into sharp contrast the power of God and the helplessness of man. In his study of religious experience, William James emphasized this factor:

There are only two ways in which it is possible to get rid of anger, worry, fear, despair, or other undesirable affections. One is that an opposite affection would break over us, and the other is by getting so exhausted with the struggle that we have to stop—so we drop down, give up and don’t care any longer.<sup>5</sup>

But self-surrender in the Christian sense follows the pattern set by Christ, who poured out His life in joyful self-surrender. Christian faith looks “unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross . . .” (Hebrews 12:2, AV). In the Christian view of surrender the emphasis is upon the freely acting self, although the action is unconscious, as well as conscious. It is the total self, and not the mind alone, that turns to God in faith. Conversion signals a shift in the personality of the individual from calculated and anxiety-ridden efforts to *prove his worth* to its opposite, the relaxed knowledge of his worth before God. The old self is given up

<sup>5</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (The Modern Library), p. 208. Used by permission of Paul R. Reynolds & Son, 599 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

("crucified"), and the "new being" is released from the slavery of sin.

Self-examination, therefore, moves through the facing of the self in confession, repentance, and self-surrender toward the experience of reconciliation. It is no mere brief cry to God for help, no momentary glance in the direction of God—but a profound change. It means the breaking up of one's fallow ground and a long cultivation of self-knowledge, culminating in a return to God. The therapeutic significance of surrender in treatment and its close analogy to religious conversion has been observed by Dr. Harry Tiebout in his work with alcoholics. He has noted that, in treatment, the patient undergoes a surrender experience that marks an unconscious turn to a positive attitude in which tenseness, hostility, and isolation are replaced by a relaxed and realistic orientation in the world. Dr. Tiebout writes:

The phenomenon of release which makes people realize that in losing their lives they are finding them, becomes explicable if one sees that the surrender which precedes the sense of release stills the inner flight and hostility, thus permitting the spontaneous creative elements of the inner self outlets for expression.”<sup>6</sup>

#### ACCEPTANCE

In coming to know the self, the Christian learns that he is known from beyond himself. In yielding his old self, he discovers the love of God as the ground of his new self. The New Testament uses the word *agape* to describe the love of God, which, in contrast to *eros*, emphasizes the creative and freely bestowed love in which the sinner is renewed. The great moments of faith are those in which one comes to the realization that he is known and sustained from beyond himself.

<sup>6</sup> Harry M. Tiebout, "The Act of Surrender in the Therapeutic Process," paper read before Columbia University Religion and Health Seminar, New York, October, 1947, 8 pp. (mimeographed).

Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine uprising;  
thou understandest my thoughts long before (Psalm  
139:1).

Man comes to God as sinner. He is accepted in love. That is the gift of salvation. The pain of self-searching and the struggle to remove the barriers of sin are always met by God. Salvation begins here in the fact that God seeks man first. This is the glad Good News of Christ. One thing man must do: He must accept the gift—accept acceptance! For in this he is already restored to *at-oneness* with himself and with his world. In Christian faith, as in therapy, the experience of being *accepted* is the beginning of the cure. *Agape*, the love of God that seeks and finds the anxiety-driven sinner even before he finds himself, is the necessary condition for the relaxation of that anxiety and for the open, receptive attitude of faith. Love and acceptance are the daily bread of renewing life. St. Bernard of Clairvaux reminded the rationally minded medieval philosophers that God is known through the affections, not through the intellect, and that it is through love that we come to trust Him, rather than in learning. Relationship to God is more than a postulate in theology. It is the work of Christian faith in every age to remind a world, conscious of its anxiety and either too frightened or too proud to reach out beyond itself, that God's love is the condition of man's being; hence also, the condition of man's knowing himself. Hear the prayer of St. Augustine, as he stood between two uncertain worlds:

Our Father, who has exhorted us to pray, who also bringest about what thou hast asked of us; since we live better when we pray to thee and are better: hear me as I tremble in this darkness and reach out thy right hand to me. Hold thy light before me and recall me from my strayings, that with thee as my guide I may return to myself and to thee.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> St. Augustine, *Soliloquies*. II. v. 19 in *An Augustine Synthesis*. p. 19.

Christian faith holds that ultimately man cannot save himself, that tragic anxiety and his sin drive him further away from the awareness of the real source of his self-division, his unwillingness to resolve the unavoidable anxiety of existence in faith. It is true that the experience of acceptance in interpersonal therapy fosters a greater degree of health and that the whole process of psychoanalysis may bring the individual into greater communication with wider areas of the personality; but unless analysis is fulfilled by something of the cosmic healing known in the experience of salvation, it remains fragmentary, and is threatened by its very limited character. Man is not merely confused and plagued by ambivalent motives. He is broken and isolated to the very core of his being, and his self-division extends to a split with his world and with the ground of his existence. Here, not only healing but redemption is necessary. The primal anxieties of man's existence have cut too deep to be covered over by man alone. In the Christian view the self must be delivered from beyond itself.

It has been pointed out many times that the self in "faith" may be possessed by something less than the redemptive love of God. Modern psychology has demonstrated emphatically that some forms of religion encourage authoritarian patterns of behavior and undermine the self-strength of the individual. Indeed, this is always the temptation of a popular religion. It replaces a vital and dynamic relation to God with a set of rules and a privileged class to enforce them. It is a false religion and a vain worship, because it rests upon the abolition of man; that is, upon the abolition of his freedom and his selfhood. In the Christian view man's relation to God is based upon voluntary action as an expression of his unique selfhood. What purpose could freedom serve in the God-created man, if the final meaning of his life required the giving up of that freedom, and with it the surrender of his distinctive being? Biblical religion knows a great deal about such false worships, and it has raised a prophetic voice in every generation to witness

against those that use religion as a means to control others,  
those who

. . . bind heavy burdens  
and grievous to be borne,  
and lay them on men's shoulders;  
but they themselves will not move them  
with one of their fingers (Matt. 23:4, AV).

Indeed, one might say that a recurring theme in the Hebrew-Christian covenant-religion is the prophetic protest against the people who, as the carriers of the faith, try to possess it for themselves. The prophets were stoned and Christ was crucified, when they threatened the authority of those that used religion as a means of enforcing the sinful pretension of priests and kings. That prophetic spirit that searches the heart, as well as the behavior, is still the most revolutionary force in our civilization. In the light of that flood-beam, the motives of every advocate of the *status quo*—whether person or institution—shall be exposed. Christian faith and freedom cannot be shackled to the proud imaginings of man.

Jesus as the Christ is for the Christian the ultimate redeeming symbol. Here, in personal terms, man's struggle encounters the love of God. As the Christ, God became a person and through Him man's sin and separation were healed. Here man is restored to himself and to God. It is within the *agape* of God alone that this restoration is possible. Thus, the love of God is both the reason for our existence and the ultimate means of our self-realization. In the person of Christ this love seeks to restore man to that true selfhood which is in relation to God. *Agape* is a freely bestowed gift. It cannot be earned. It can only be accepted.

The first Christians preached the simple Gospel that Christ died for our sins and was raised up for our justification. In Him at-one-ment is accomplished. The cross is the measure of man's sin and of the unfailing love of God.

Those first Christians felt the surge of a new life in Christ, a new life in which the power of sin and anxiety had been broken. This, they insisted, was no "cunningly devised fable," but a reality in their lives. Nor did they gloss over the cost on Calvary or the desperate struggle that every convert must wage with sin. In Calvin's terms they sought their peace "only in the terrors of Christ," their Redeemer, having found in Him the strong love of God to persevere. Thus the outreach of God in Christ meets and accepts the sinner in his search for deliverance from the tyranny of the anxiety that is characteristic of his contradictory existence.

#### THREE ASPECTS OF JUSTIFICATION

The word *justification* today implies, in popular use, vindication, but the biblical use of this word refers more to right relations with man or with God. St. Paul sets forth the Christian view of justification in the first chapters of Romans, where he holds that, apart from a right relation to God, the Jew in his Law or the Greek in his ethics can experience *only* the wrath of God. Apart from that vital relation to God, man's efforts shuttle between anxiety and pride. The result is an anger-filled people whose bent is destruction. The apostle insists that God alone, in Christ, can close the gap between man's futility in trying to save himself in proud isolation and the acceptance of himself in faith. In a few succinct words St. Paul gives his explanation of justification:

. . . since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith (Romans 3:23-25).

Man's recovered right relation with God is the work of Christ. It is, in the deepest sense, the recovery of man himself. But it is a gift from God that must be received in

faith. He who busily engages in works to prove his worth has already rendered himself unable to receive that most precious gift.

The problem of self-worth and the manner in which man has tried to secure it, stand behind many of the anxiety manifestations in this culture. Perhaps the following account of a pastoral counseling experience will serve to make more explicit the meaning of justification, as that term is used in Christianity.

This pastoral counseling relation lasted over a period of two years, during which the counselee moved from a withdrawn, self-divided state toward a wider participation by choice in her own community life. Mrs. Blank was first seen in a general hospital where she was being treated after a miscarriage. Her father had suggested the call to the counselor, explaining that she had "turned her face to the wall." This was taken to mean that she had lost interest in living. There had been several miscarriages and a growing sense of futility in Mrs. Blank's life that was clearly noticeable to those that lived close to her. She was a woman in her late thirties, married, the mother of two physically healthy children. Her husband was shy and rather withdrawn. It was learned later that Mrs. Blank and her family had lived apart from her parents for a number of years, but recently had been forced to return home for reasons of economy.

The hospital call with Mrs. Blank was brief and uneventful, but it provided the basis for a continuing relationship that eventually resulted in her request for pastoral help some months later.

When Mrs. Blank finally came for assistance, she explained that she had delayed this action because she had long doubted that there could be any help for her. Mrs. Blank presented a picture of strange contradictions: she had been an active woman, who had always "taken charge of things" and managed her own life; but now she seemed

withdrawn and defeated. She thought of herself as a "Christian," concerned for others, but at the same time she felt deep resentment when any claims were made on her. At one point she remembered with much negative feeling that, as a child, she had felt threatened when her parents had added to an already large family by taking in orphaned children. Finally, she felt angry and exhausted that, despite all her busy activity, she "got nowhere." This was expressed in a dream in which she was on a merry-go-round that always stopped where it had started.

The counselor observed a gradual change in Mrs. Blank during the following months. Her withdrawal and her "helplessness" had become the final unconscious strategies by which she purchased the concern of others. Within the *givenness* of the pastoral counseling relation, she moved out into more responsible relations with herself and others. Behind her feeling of impoverishment was the deeply buried conviction that she was valuable only insofar as she could "possess" value, "perform," or "be useful" to others. During this early period, one of her dreams was about a diminutive person trying to turn over the page of a huge, gilded Bible. Gradually, Mrs. Blank came to face the contradiction to her faith involved in her constant effort to ground her value in something she could do or possess, rather than in herself as a child of God. Her concern now became the question, "What is the meaning of my relationships?" It was not without much vacillation between a desperate use of helplessness and a painful awareness of lost living that she began to move out again into satisfying relations with others. At this point she dreamed of passing through a narrow passage and of crossing a stream, and her concern became more and more "How can I express myself through my life, my family, my Church?" Faith had meaning now, not as a heavy, gilded book the pages of which she tried hard to turn, but as a response to a God-given relation that sought expression. Several months after this experience she described her feel-

ings as moving in the direction of "the capacity to give and to receive love without guilt feelings, to be free from anxiety and dependence." For her, these benefits flowed from the growing realization that preceding anything she did was a relationship to God, made right in Christ and made her own in faith.

Guilt, anxiety, and loneliness are the realities of man's life in sin and separation. It is in the faith of the Christian that God has acted and continues to act in His Holy Spirit and through His faithful people mightily to remedy this devastation of man. Grace begins even before man looks for help. God cares. But every Christian must be reminded that the reality of despair cannot be evaded. The Gospel of Christ is nonsense to one that is unwilling to face his own involvement in guilt and "dead-end" living. The Gospel is Good News only to those that are willing to share its death and resurrection. It was in this sense that Kierkegaard could write, "He who with respect to guilt is educated by dread will therefore repose only in atonement."<sup>8</sup>

#### FORGIVENESS

The word *justification* in the Greek Bible may also be translated as *righteousness*. It refers to an experience whereby one is brought into right relations with another person. There is profound wisdom in the biblical insistence that the heart of righteousness is relationship, not ethical achievement. Thus the ultimate command that comes as a climax in the Sermon on the Mount is to "seek first his (*i.e.*, your heavenly Father's) kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well (Matthew 6:33). Let us note that "these things," which include the whole range of Christian virtues, both the longing for perfection and the deliverance from anxiety, are not to be sought alone. They are given to him that seeks first a faithful relation to God

<sup>8</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Dread* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 145.

in Christ. The current revival of interest in ethics is likely to produce little but deeper despair over our unrighteousness, unless it results in the re-creative meeting of God and man in faith. Righteousness is the fruit of the faith community. It will be sought in vain when sought apart from that community.

Forgiveness is the reality of man's restored relation to God. We shall do well to remember that the verb *to give* is at the heart of forgiveness. Since it is man's sin that has broken the unity of God's created world, forgiveness requires action on the part of God. This is the theme of much of the Bible. Burrows enumerated a few of the ways in which the Bible describes God's dealing with man's sins: ". . . he heals them, removes them or puts them far away, puts them behind his back, conceals or covers them, lifts or takes them away, wipes them away or blots them out."<sup>\*</sup>

But forgiveness of sin is not a simple divine fiat. It is a deeply personal experience, not a legal manipulation; and it takes place in a manner that expresses the reality of sin and its character in man's life as utterly opposite to the reality of God's forgiving love. Here the historical realism of the picture of Christ in the New Testament is crucial. The event of Christ is of the stuff of history, and every forgiven sinner *lives into* that story by faith. This is no sentimental dream nor mystic's ecstatic vision. It happened in history; and the dust of Palestine, the sweat and grime of men's faces, the pain, the blood, and the exultant joy of it are attested by witnesses whose faith has touched the faith that touches ours.

The "new man" of God's forgiveness still belongs to the world of sin and its consequences, but the power of sin to rob him of ultimate hope has been removed. Forgiveness is the good news of the Gospel, a message "wholly other" to the world's accounting of credit and debt, and yet miracu-

\* Miller Burrows, *An Outline of Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), p. 178.

lously adequate to heal the disease that plagues man. It heals and restores in a way that is not unlike man's experience of forgiveness in an interpersonal relation, but it does so in a deeper and more permanently satisfying sense. Forgiveness restores genuine worth beyond alienation in recovered wholeness at every level of man's being. Thus restored, man participates in God's reconciling action within the community of those who forgive, as they have been forgiven. In forgiveness the "new man" is born of God's love.

In western Christendom the experience of Martin Luther has profoundly influenced the handling of sin and anxiety in relation to forgiveness. Driven by an overwhelming anxiety to find his own peace in zealous works, he discovered that his activity only heightened his desperation until, in reading St. Paul again, he rediscovered the Gospel of God's forgiving love. Here he found health and salvation anew, release from sin and tormenting conscience. The words of Christ rang with great clarity and moment for his despairing soul, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." And Luther comforted himself with the immediate significance of these words: ". . . look not upon them in thyself, but remember that they are translated and laid upon Christ, whose stripes have made thee whole."<sup>10</sup>

## FAITH

Quieted thus in the depths of his soul, a man may accept himself as grounded in and cared for by God, an attitude that we recognize as the opposite of sin. Faith is this confidence, inspired by Christ, that makes it possible for a man to forget himself in spontaneous and loving relations with his fellows. Faith in Christ is the acceptance of oneself in the knowledge that God has already accepted him in the sacrifice of Christ. Indeed, that sacrifice manifests the eternal nature of God. The agony of Calvary and its triumph

<sup>10</sup> Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians* (James Duncan, 1830), p. 109.

beyond tragedy reveal that genuine selfhood is possible,<sup>1</sup> though painful, in unbroken and loving communion between God and man. Faith does not mean that one is merely "adjusted," or that all of life's tensions are removed. It is an attitude of the whole personality that reflects confidence and peace, rather than anxiety and sin.<sup>2</sup>

The vicious cycle of anxiety, hostility, and guilt is broken by faith and healed in love. Faith—*pistis* to the early Christians—is that decisive response to the love of God, poured out in Christ, which makes it possible for one to turn from oppressive anxiety to an attitude of trust in the relationship *made right* by God. In her anxiety to "justify" herself, Mrs. Blank was constantly engaged in the effort to "prove her worth." But as she came to accept acceptance in faith, her busy activity lost its driving incentive. Her concern became one of expressing gratitude for the "new being" that she had come to be in faith.

In the light of modern psychology's understanding of anxiety, Luther's emphasis on faith rather than works takes on new significance. As we have seen, anxiety relentlessly drives man on in his effort to find justification for himself. But peace does not come, as long as anxiety underlies his actions. It comes only as a complete shift of the whole personality from anxiety to faith issues in "quietness and confidence." Luther insisted that it is not many good works, but faith which "redeems, corrects, and preserves our conscience." That his target was the vacillating pride and anxiety behind busy activity, and not good works themselves, is clear in his *Treatise on Christian Liberty*, where he explains that faith does not free one from good works, but from false opinions concerning them. He added elsewhere:

Where there is no faith, there everyone presumptuously undertakes to better himself by means of works and to make himself well-pleasing to God. When this

happens, false security and presumption arise therefrom, as though man were well-pleasing to God because of his own works. When this does not happen, the conscience has no rest and knows not what to do, that it may become well-pleasing to God.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, for Luther, faith brings healing to the anxious soul in a way that no amount of good works could. In view of the soundness of Luther's emphasis at this point, it is rather surprising to find Fromm characterizing Luther's concept of faith as a "compulsive quest for certainty." Fromm holds that, psychologically, faith may be of two entirely different varieties: "It can be the expression of an inner relatedness to mankind and affirmation of life; or it can be a reaction formation against a fundamental feeling of doubt, rooted in the isolation of the individual . . ." <sup>12</sup> Fromm has decided that Luther's faith falls in the latter category and that it delivered people, after the Reformation, into submission to the tyrannical authority of a God primarily concerned with subduing the individual self.

It certainly must be admitted that doubt and uncertainty played a role in the theological development of Luther and the reformers. In this they truly expressed their age. Their minds laid bare the turmoil and agony of a people whose inner disturbance and self-division was indicated by the intensity of the Reformation break. But Luther's concept of faith stood against the other activist consequences of this inner turmoil. A "fundamental feeling of doubt, rooted in the isolation of the individual" is an accurate description of the motivating force behind busy works. In Luther's view, "works" included all the things an anxiety-ridden person may do to prove his worth—from "good deeds" to frequent confession (which Luther seemed to suspect of having obsessional dangers). Indeed, what

<sup>11</sup> Martin Luther, *Works* (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Co. and Castle Press, 1915), I, 308.

<sup>12</sup> Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, p. 78.

Fromm does not seem to be willing to admit is that existence always involves shock and the threat of isolation to free, but finite, man; and that Luther's faith made it possible for him to live with these uncertainties. It would seem that Fromm's judgment that Luther's faith was a "reaction formation" would have been more relevant if, instead of faith, Luther had sought salvation through busy, compulsive works. The reformer was delivered from sin and torment of conscience only to the extent that he was able to accept the gift of Christ in faith: "Grace releaseth sin, and peace maketh the conscience quiet. The two fiends that torment us are sin and conscience."<sup>13</sup>

In faith, the Christian participates in the healing power that is rooted in the realm of the divine. By faith he knows the joy of a new creation and a "new being." In this moment the power of anxiety is broken, and man's ability to love is restored. Such is the testimony of the New Testament and of religious experience throughout the ages. Faith opens the way for love. It removes the mountain which separates man from God.

#### NURTURE

Love is the fruit of faith. In loving self-relations and in interpersonal relations, it is possible for selfhood to mature in faith. Both the experience of justification in faith, and sanctification in love and communion are required to heal sin and anxiety in man's soul. Luther's zeal to remove trust in "works" has resulted in an overwhelming emphasis in Protestantism upon the act of justification by faith, to the neglect of the continuing "returning and rest" in the faith and holy fellowship that Catholic Christianity has striven to maintain. It is important to keep in mind that there is more to God's grace than forgiveness of sins. There is also that renewing strength and "daily increase" of God's Holy Spirit, which the prayer of Confirmation so well expresses.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians*, p. 12.

The full work of reconciliation is accomplished within the area of the holy fellowship where men accept forgiveness in faith and live within the relationship described by Christian symbols. The Church is the place where the Christian experience is possible. With St. Augustine we add that the Christian experience is not the exclusive possession of the visible Church. It belongs to all the citizens of that holy city of God who love Him above all things. But the Church in the world remains as a reminder that God's love calls us into community and restores us to the loving nurture of one another intended in the beginning. Man was made for communion, not for solitude. Creation is fulfilled when community becomes holy fellowship.

What does it mean to experience justification and reconciliation with God? We have held, first of all, that it means a restored relationship, made right by God's action, within which one can accept acceptance and forgiveness through the response of faith. It means not only release and separation from the prison house of sin, but also entrance upon a new life characterized more by faith than by anxiety. It is a new beginning; but it is only a beginning. It must be nurtured in love and strengthened by growth in the Christian fellowship. Unfortunately, there are many "Christians" whose feverish anxiety about the state and degree of their justification betrays an anxiety-ridden self, a self whose faith conforms more to Fromm's definition of a "reaction formation." These Christians use the phrases "justification" and "salvation," but at heart one feels that they have not heard or have been unable to accept God's message of forgiveness and reconciliation. For here there is a source of moral spontaneity that makes it unnecessary to be anxious about one's spiritual security. Many a Christian, like the Psalmist whose faith was shaken when he compared his lot to the "prosperity of the wicked," flees into self-pity whenever the real motive of his "faith" is exposed:

Then have I cleansed my heart in vain,  
and washed my hands in innocence (Psalm 73:13).

And like the Psalmist, such Christians will not rediscover the meaning of their faith until they go again to "the sanctuary of God," where, although "flesh and heart" fail, God is their "strength and portion for ever."

The question remains: Is justification the whole picture? What of that growth in holiness that the Church has called sanctification? Does one grow in grace toward sanctification, or in view of the fact that sin and anxiety are so persistent in human existence, is talk about sanctification a dangerous illusion? This has remained a serious problem for the Christian Church. In terms of anxiety, the question resolves itself into one of whether, by the help of grace and the sacraments of the Church, anxiety and sin may be progressively reduced, or whether the task of justification is present at every moment for the individual. The Catholic view has held that justification restores man to God and turns the soul from self-love to love of God, whereupon it may grow in grace. But the Catholic view has concerned itself more and more with the process of sanctification and the means to it, so that the need for justification at every moment has been subordinated or has disappeared. Behind the Catholic view is its concept of the fall as only a loss in degree of original perfection, and it holds that the crucial matter is grace, which restores and completes imperfect nature. Thus in the words of Moberly, the Anglo-Catholic writer, "There is no ultimate distinction between 'to justify' and 'to make righteous'; between a man's being pronounced righteous by the truth of God and being, in the truth of God, righteous."<sup>14</sup>

The Reformation, on the other hand, being acutely conscious of man's sin and of the infinite variety of ways in which he escapes the confrontation of himself in sin, dis-

<sup>14</sup> Robert C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality* (London: Longmans, Green, 1902), p. 885.

tinguished sharply between justification and sanctification, tending to emphasize the former. As a result, a large section of Protestantism has tended to neglect the specific nurture, locus, and renewal of the Christian life, signified in the concept of sanctification. The Reformers emphasized the danger of self-righteous pride in the Catholic view, which held that one could, by the help of priestly and sacramental grace, meet the divine confrontation of his life with an easy conscience. Fundamentally, they questioned whether the power of inordinate self-love is broken in justification. Sin remains to infect man's every effort to realize the fruits of his faith in love, a fact that prompted a modern skeptical philosopher to ask if the final truth of the Christian Gospel is "the persistence of sin in the lives of the redeemed."<sup>15</sup> While accepting the fact of the persistence of sin in those that have experienced justification, it is our view that reconciliation breaks the power of primal anxiety and sets man on the threshold of a new life in love. The redeemed may lose faith—anxiety and sin remaining a problem—but since he has known the joy of untrammeled love, if only for a moment, that memory will not let him forget the direction of his salvation. Eucharist—genuine thanksgiving—has entered his life. We hold further that the Church, as the holy fellowship, provides both the locus and the means of the strengthening and unfolding of the genuine selfhood discovered in reconciliation. While it is true that the Church is actually made up of anxious and sinful people, its loyalty to the Gospel is measured by its confession of this fact and by its continued efforts to realize in its corporate life the significance of the redeeming love of God. The good news of the Gospel is that Christ has made possible a new life, in which anxiety is broken in faith and resolved in love. That life is manifest in the Church, where faith works through love.

<sup>15</sup> John H. Randall, "A Review of *The Nature and Destiny of Man* by Reinhold Niebuhr," *Union Review*, IV, 2, 22.

#### A NEW CREATURE

It will be recalled that, in our discussion of man as sinner in the last chapter, we came to the conclusion that self-hatred, rooted in the paradox of pride and anxiety, is the basic attitude of sinful man. The ultimate sin is that man refuses to accept himself as grounded in God. In anxiety he despises himself because he cannot save himself. Now faith has been defined as the opposite condition, the state wherein man accepts himself as redeemed by God. What, therefore, is the consequent basic attitude of man in reconciliation? In the New Testament it is a reflection of the freely given love of God—*agape*. St. Paul in that famous Corinthian passage sketched the meaning of *agape*: . . . Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (I Cor. 13:17).

In *agape* all laws are transcended, all contradictions resolved in the outgoing and uncalculating love of God. It establishes a new covenant, written not in laws but in the hearts of men, and known in terms of healing salvation. Christian faith has held that man is regenerated from within, and that he encounters God in the depths of his own soul. The starting point, therefore, of the Christian attitude toward the self is in the attitude of God toward man: His acceptance and love.

It is common knowledge in psychiatric work today that a child's capacity to love depends upon the amount of genuine love that he has experienced in the family relation. The child of a permissive and loving mother is much more likely to relate himself in a positive way to others than one whose mother is basically forbidding and rejecting. The Christian Gospel has asserted this truth by emphasizing the freely given divine love and man's capacity to love in the knowledge that God has first loved him. This is the *saving grace* which the New Testament proclaimed; but it must be emphasized that it is based upon love as *agape*, in which

both the loving and the loved are caught up in a transcending experience of unity, unqualified by the use of love for control or submission. This point is stated in rebuttal of the notion, held in some psychiatric circles, that Christian love is used in a way similar to the neurotic mother's control of her child by the formula, "I have loved you, now you must obey me!" It is true, of course, that the Christian symbols may be put to such neurotic uses, but in these cases the "love" employed is something less than the love of God manifested in Christ; and it is the "love" of one whose need to dominate reflects a significant unfamiliarity with the "peace of God which passeth all understanding."

In coming to the Christian experience, man is taught to love God with his whole heart and to love his neighbor as himself. Christian opinion is divided as to whether self-love is implied in this summary. St. Augustine, for instance, held that it implies three things that man should love: God, himself, and his neighbor; and thus "he who loves God offends not in loving himself . . ." <sup>16</sup> On the other hand, Protestant thought, because of its consciousness that sin always infects the love of self (even as a part of the love of God and neighbor), has consequently avoided the term and has tended to consider self-love as the primary sin. Reinhold Niebuhr has indicated, in personal conversation, that he would reject the concept of self-love as a true Christian concept. In his review of Fromm's book, *Man for Himself*, in which Fromm sets forth his principle of genuine self-love, Niebuhr writes:

An insecure and impoverished self is not made secure by the admonition to be concerned for itself; for an excessive concern for its security is the cause of its impoverishment.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Przywara, *An Augustine Synthesis*, p. 851.

<sup>17</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, "Review of *Man for Himself* by Erich Fromm," *Christianity and Society*, XIII, 2, 26-28.

Perhaps one of the difficulties in the use of the term *self-love* is that it brings to mind this unhealthy self-concern to which Professor Niebuhr refers; for, to be sure, anxious self-centeredness is at the base of man's problem as a sinner. But, on the other hand, self-love in the sense of acceptance of one's own being as grounded in and cared for by God is not excessive self-concern. Indeed, it is a genuine basis of overcoming the primal anxiety that drives man into sin. It is, furthermore, a reflection of the love of God, which in human relations can free man from the anxiety that holds him a slave to selfishness. For the Christian, only the strong love of God, and thus of neighbor and of self, is able to shatter the chains that bind man to his self-contradictory ways. It is in this light that Professor Niebuhr adds to his comment on the impoverished self:

Nor is it made secure by the admonition to love others because of its anxiety about itself. That is why a profound religion has always insisted that the self cannot be cured by law, but only by grace; and also why the profoundest forms of the Christian faith regard this preoccupation as not fully curable and therefore as requiring another kind of grace: that of forgiveness.<sup>18</sup>

It remains, then, that self-love, in the sense of respect for the self as redeemed by God, follows naturally upon the love of God and of neighbor.

The new creature of Christian faith has encountered the love and forgiveness that bring health in and beyond the limits of his own self-realization. In discovering himself, man discovers God at the very heart of the universe. He also finds spontaneous community with others who, like himself, belong in Christ's kingdom. And the *new* thing about a Christian man is his faith and love, wherein brokenness is healed and freedom and selfhood are fulfilled in the

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

worship of Him, whose service is perfect freedom. That fulfillment is the answer to St. Paul's prayer in Ephesians:

May you be filled with all the completion God has to give (Ephesians 4:18, Knox).

#### THE SYMBOLS OF RECONCILIATION

We have held throughout this study that the specific locus of the Christian experience is in Christian community. Here, in company with "a great cloud of witnesses," man's faith is nurtured, and the wounds of anxiety healed. Man's deepest hurt is always suffered in loneliness. His cure must take place in community. Even the psychiatrist must heal through the establishment of an accepting community with his patient. But, beyond the consulting room, the patient looks in vain for such a community in contemporary culture.

The Church holds out the promise of an accepting community, although it must be frankly admitted that too often its promise is not fulfilled. The anxiety-ridden ways of this world receive simply a pious cloak in many congregations. Where there is promise, however, there is the possibility of fulfillment. The renewal of the Church in our "crowd culture" offers the prospect of restored community.

It is in the sacraments that the Church comes to grips, in specific terms, with the needs of man in anxiety and sin. Here the Church employs the intrinsic powers of nature, as well as some of the basic activities of man's life, as curative agents. The sacraments involve the participation of the whole self in worshipful acts which, by re-enacting a specific aspect of the drama of redemption, impart spiritual gifts to the participant. Goethe once said that the highest cannot be spoken, it can only be acted. Thus the sacraments are holy acts and symbols, which become the bearers of God's grace to man.

Holy Baptism evolved in the Church as the sacrament of initiation into the Christian community. Like Holy Com-

munion, it was specifically directed by Christ Himself. In the early Church, it marked the incorporation of the convert into the Church, and was usually accompanied by the laying on of hands, an act that signified both the confirmation of the faith of the initiate and the bestowal of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In Holy Baptism, cleansing from sin and restoration to unity with God, are symbolized by the water and by the acceptance into the "congregation of Christ's flock." Baptism marks the death of the *old self* with its tragic anxiety and separation, and the birth of the *new self* in touch with the holy fellowship. The full fruit of baptism, that is, acceptance of one's self as "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven" must be brought to maturity within that holy fellowship. Members of a congregation will do well to remember that they *start* more than they *finish* in a baptismal service. Its completion depends upon the kind of experience that the child will know among the members of Christ's flock. For although nothing can change the fact that God has claimed His own in the baptism, the meaning of that fact will be interpreted by experience.

Baptism was, to the early Christians, the seal of an inward change and the means of grace; but that it was not a guarantee against further sin is attested by the great concern with post-baptismal sin. The fact that faith restores man to unity with God and that the holy fellowship offers him an opportunity to find health for his divided self in loving communion does not mean that his primal anxiety is automatically resolved. Much prayer and fasting, as well as much soul searching, is required of those who would win the battle of sin and anxiety in their own hearts. Like the Kingdom of God, the *new self is beginning to come in the visible sacrament*; to further its growth, man must cooperate. In view of this persistence of sin and the need for continual returning to God, the Church has developed the Sacrament of Penance. From ancient times the

therapy of confession and absolution has been practiced within Christendom.

It is not our purpose here to outline the history of the Sacrament of Penance, except to indicate briefly the fact that in penance and pastoral care the Church has dealt with the same problems that are presented in psychotherapy today. The early Christians were acutely conscious of the fact that sin excludes the individual from active participation in the common life of the Church. Hatred between Christian brothers had to be reconciled before their gifts were acceptable at the altar. Confession of sin before the whole congregation and restitution for offenses committed were required, from earliest times, in order to be received again into the full fellowship and to obtain the assurance of God's mercy. As time went on, public confession was supplemented by secret confession, in which the priest played a greater role. But in both cases, penance was the means by which the "lost life" of the Christian was restored. Even though the penitential system of Christendom has become rigid and authoritarian in some aspects, it represents basically the creative and health-giving character of Christian faith in practice. McNeill has written concerning *The Penitentials*, which embodied the confessional practice of the medieval period:

The penitentials offer to the sinner the means of rehabilitation. He is given guidance to the way of recovering harmonious relations with the Church, society, and God. Freed in the process of penance from social censure, he recovers the lost personal values of which his offenses have deprived him. He can once more function as a normal person.<sup>19</sup>

Origen recommended the seeking out of "skilled and merciful physicians" who know the "discipline of comfort

<sup>19</sup> John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), p. 46. Used by permission of the publisher.

and sympathy." Such a description is a fair definition of the pastoral-care responsibility of the priest that developed along with the penitential system of the Church. Those that were not comforted by the open and direct acknowledgement of sin in the congregation must have required more and more attention from the priests that were skilled in this field. The medieval penitentials, though limited from our point of view, represent the growing effort of the Church to develop a "discipline of comfort and sympathy" for those in need of pastoral guidance.

The value of auricular confession is a subject of some controversy within Christendom. Where it has become perfunctory, where it is a brief and formal recitation of carefully selected sins, its genuinely health-giving qualities are questionable. Jung has reminded us that "nature is not lenient with unconscious sinners"; and the sin behind sins is apt to remain unconscious in very brief and formal confessions. On the other hand, we have already discussed the dangers involved in "general confessions." The Anglican Church has retained a place for private confession as well as for public; and the specific situations in which the former is mentioned in the Book of Common Prayer (namely, in The Exhortations and in The Communion of the Sick) are more than likely to require that the priest serve as both confessor and counselor. This relationship should serve to strengthen and sharpen both functions of the priest. It would seem that a church that keeps open the possibility of person to person confession and absolution will, on the whole, in its life and sacraments, maintain closer contact with the real needs of the people and keep its message of salvation firmly grounded in human experience. I note that Tillich attributes the spread of psychoanalysis in Protestant countries not only to the "rigorous moralism" that developed when the sacraments were taken away, but also to "the solitude of the deciding individual, who has to bear responsibility and guilt without the help of confession and

the related forgiveness which comes from the outside.”<sup>20</sup>

Since we are primarily interested in the role of Christian symbols in meeting anxiety today, we must conclude this discussion of reconciliation with a brief survey of the pastoral function of the priest. It will be recalled that, in our introductory chapter, we noted that the practical result of Cartesian dualism has been to divide man into body and spirit. Such a division has played its part in limiting the pastoral function of the priest to the strictly “spiritual” aspects of man’s life. But the ministry of reconciliation breaks over such artificial barriers, and in every age men turn to the priest for help and counsel. With the renewal of the concept of wholeness in modern views of health, it is to be expected that pastoral care will become more and more important in helping man find the deepest satisfactions of health.

The impact of recent psychology upon theological teaching and training is still in the period of exploration, but already there are indications that the function of pastoral care is enhanced by an orientation in the direction of the findings of modern psychology. The significant work done by hospital chaplains and the training programs undertaken by many seminaries, as well as the formation of joint study groups, point to a widespread interest in the field.<sup>21</sup> These joint efforts have brought out the fact that the contradiction between the concern of religion for dependence on God and the concern of psychiatry for the growth of human self-sufficiency, is not perhaps quite as irreconcilable as might be supposed. The late Professor Roberts has suggested the partial resolution of this antinomy:

<sup>20</sup> Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, p. 228, footnote.

<sup>21</sup> I refer particularly to the pioneer work done by Chaplains Anton Boisen, Otis Rice, Carroll Wise and Russell Dicks, the various clinical training programs, and the Washington meeting of Psychiatrists and Ministers, as well as to the Columbia University Seminar on Religion and Health. It is significant that the William A. White School of Psychiatry in New York City now provides a course of training for clergymen.

On the theological side it is necessary to emphasize that belief in God is being abused when it is made into a substitute for fulfilling natural and human conditions that are within men's scope. On the psychiatric side it is necessary to recognize that an increasing capacity for responsibility is quite compatible with continued dependence upon forces beyond one's control.<sup>22</sup>

In his role as priest and counselor, the pastor must bring the resources of Christian faith to bear upon the problems of his people. In order to help others, he also must know himself, both his capacities and his limitations. Such knowledge can be gained only by long and honest prayer, self-observation, and a gradual reintegration of his personality in terms of the self-knowledge gained. In his work as counselor, the pastor will be helped by clinical experience and a knowledge of personality functioning. He will learn, for example, that, in his relation to one seeking help, an additional relationship to the one that appears on the surface always develops. This additional relationship is determined by the counselee's problem in living, be it dependency or dominance, for example, with which he unconsciously approaches every interpersonal relation. It becomes the task of the priest-counselor not only to be aware of this distortion on the part of his parishioner, but also to use his authority and competence to assist another human being toward free and responsible existence under God.

#### SUMMARY

Reconciliation in Christian faith is mediated through the Christian community and pastoral care. It is the task of the pastor to preach the Gospel of Christ—the message of God's judgment and His redeeming love—through which man can face his anxiety and his pride, and find himself again in

<sup>22</sup> David Roberts, "Psychiatry and the Doctrine of Original Sin," paper presented to the Columbia University Seminar on Religion and Health, New York, November, 1946, 7 pp. (mimeo.).

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God's mercy. It is the continuing responsibility of the priest and of the holy fellowship to nurture that inward shift from anxiety to faith, from excessive self-concern to self-acceptance as a son of God. The ancient injunction to Peter by the Sea of Tiberias, "Feed my sheep!", applies as forcibly today to the pastor whose people struggle through the dark night of anxiety.

## MAN IN COMMUNION

The modern day Nicodemus comes to Christ under the cover of anonymity. He is alone. His questions bear the sting of wasted years. "Tell me," he says, "why do I burn with anger when all I want is peace? The praise of your skill is on the lips of everyone. Cure the hurt of my soul." And the answer is the same as yesterday, "Unless one is born anew . . ." "But," protests the caller, "I am no mere child, and besides, a man does not give birth to himself—alone. I don't need other people." Again the answer comes with quiet persistence, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." "But why?" the questioner exclaims. "I don't want to enter anything. I have earned my independence. I remember well the hard years of college and the struggle of medical school. There I was led to believe that the practice of medicine is a matter of diagnosis and prescription. What a lie! I found that people want 'talk' with their pills. They insist on telling me about all their pains. Why can't I treat them and have them let me alone? I'm so angry, I haven't read a medical journal in three years!" "You flee from meeting others," says Christ, "and fear is your prison. Open the door of your heart and rejoice that a man is born again."

### MAN FULFILLED IN COMMUNITY

Thus, in fear of human intimacy, man stands alone and outside, filled with anger because of his unfulfilled life. To be born anew is to enter again into the depths of human

intimacy, of knowing and of being known. But a man without faith and without the help of the faith community may linger forever on the threshold. He is unwilling to give up the possibility of real meeting, but yet too frightened to enter for himself. For a man's encounter with himself, which comes as a part of his encounter with God and neighbor, forces him into a night of wrestling with himself.

If real life is meeting, man must face himself in the process of meeting others. But self-searching is impossible apart from a community of genuine concern. One must have ground to stand on if he is to examine his own soul with honesty. It is painfully true of modern history that such a community does not exist. It is equally true that the diminishment of man—his loss of humanity—bears some relation to the disappearance of community. The anxiety of existence, when unanswered in faith, drives man into deep alienation and separation:

. . . alive but alone, belonging—where—?  
Unattached as tumbleweed . . .<sup>1</sup>

It is somewhat ironical that modern man's anxiety about "becoming himself" or "being himself" has in fact coincided with a period in history when his real life, in love, faith and self-fulfillment, has been steadily reduced. This threat to man's existence must be met on the deepest level by faith and loving community. The secular world has rediscovered this reality in psychotherapy. But secular therapy is limited, both in the extent of the community that it can offer and in its handling of the anxiety behind real guilt and meaninglessness. The psychiatrist's office is not the Church, nor are his "interpretations" the absolution. For the Christian, the courage to "become himself" springs from within the Holy Spirit community, as he discovers and fulfills his elemental relation to God in freedom. When the prodigal son came to

<sup>1</sup> Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*, p. 43. Used by permission of the publisher.

himself, his relation to his father was recovered, a relation that on one side only had been lost in sin and separation. Self-realization as a goal for living takes on meaning only in relation to the community in which it is fulfilled. Man finds himself—who he is and what his destiny is—through meeting and response. For this, his only opportunity is in the actual community in which he lives, loves, believes, hopes and fears. For the Christian the Church becomes the place where lost humanity is recovered. The “new man” in Christ lives in the community of the Holy Spirit wherein the whole person—reason, emotion and vital senses—is being fulfilled.

#### COMMUNION

In Christian community, anxiety is broken in the depths of man's soul through faith, and it is healed in loving communion. The Christian life is lived out in the holy fellowship. It is significant that the New Testament is more concerned with the quality of the new life in Christ than it is with laying down rules for Church order. It rather proclaims a joyful Gospel that the spirit of God has been poured out upon those that, having repented and received baptism, now live in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, where the shared life of bread broken and prayers offered flows naturally from a common faith in Christ.

The early Church must be understood on the background of the “givenness” of community life in Hebrew thought. This is difficult for those that understand community as an aggregate of individuals. In Hebrew life, the individual lives by participation in the common life, and that totality of unity and harmony he calls *shalom*. The first Christians found that they had been brought into a new kind of fellowship, or communion, by the work of the Holy Spirit. Those that shared the common life in Christ were convinced that the miracles of faith working through love, which are described in the Book of Acts, were the unique products of their communion together. Charles Gore has

said that if you had asked one of the early believers what it means to be a Christian, you would have gotten one of two answers: (1) "It is to confess that Jesus is Lord"; or (2) "It is to have received the Spirit."<sup>2</sup>

To the extent to which the Christian fellowship today approximates its ancient counterpart, it is a place where anxiety is reduced. It is obvious that anxiety is overcome only in moments of triumphant faith. It remains a challenge to the Christian in every other moment of existence. St. Paul has reminded us that as long as man is "in this tent," he sighs with anxiety, even though a new power is at work within him in the redeeming love of God. Loving communion is both realized, and yet not fully achieved, in the Christian fellowship. It is a reality where man has passed from anxious self-centeredness to genuine selfhood, and it is not achieved to the extent that man never completely overcomes the barriers that separate and isolate him. It is in communion, however, that the Christian fellowship provides man with the opportunity to discover the implications of new life in Christ.

Psychotherapists have pointed out that those that suffer from disturbances in living must undergo a "corrective emotional experience" in order to be helped. In therapy such an experience is characterized by an acceptance and genuine concern that encourages a growing honesty in interpersonal relations. In reality, the Christian community has meant just such acceptance and warm personal concern for many people. It must be admitted, however, that too frequently a rigid spirit has prevented the Christian community from becoming a genuine Christian fellowship. In such instances, the people who call themselves "churchmen" fail to give evidence that they have experienced the meaning of salvation in their own lives. They suffer from the common anxiety that "dogs" modern man. As Christians, their failure to

<sup>2</sup> Charles Gore, *The Holy Spirit and the Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), p. 2.

settle anxiety more effectively is the more tragic because they stand so near its deepest resolution. On the other hand, where the enthusiasm of the early Church is still alive or has been reborn within Christendom, where the Gospel is truly preached and the sacraments truly received, the Christian communion is a reality that stands as a strong bulwark against subversive anxiety. This is a recorded fact in the clinical experience of an ever growing number of psychiatrists and counselors who have concerned themselves with the relation of Christianity to health.

But a warning is in order here: the primary task of Christianity is not the relief of anxiety. When that becomes its goal, it is as useless as salt that has lost its savor. The business of the Church is to show forth Jesus Christ, not only with lips, but also in living. The exchange of faith for anxiety comes about as a result of man's responding to God in Jesus Christ. In that response and in the community created by it, the dark loneliness of separation is overcome. There, having passed from death unto life, we belong to one another not because of anything we do, but because we belong to God. The resolution of anxiety is a fruit of Christian faith. It comes as a gift, while we are preoccupied with entering into the joy of our heavenly Father.

#### THE CHURCH AS *Koinonia*

In the New Testament two words are used to describe the Christian community. *Ekklesia* (church) refers to those that are called out of the world to become God's people. *Koinonia* in the New Testament is a unique word that always refers to the common life in the Holy Spirit community. *Koinonia* can be only roughly translated as "fellowship," because the latter has come to mean a kind of merely human intimacy that does not take into account the fact that God, the Holy Spirit, dwells in the *Koinonia*. The New Testament scholar, L. S. Thornton, reminds us that the *Koinonia*, as described in Acts, involved "the sharing of a

common life whose source was God" and whose eschatological outlook was reflected in the fact that all things were held in common.<sup>3</sup> For these Christians, it was inconceivable that either the gifts of this world or the Holy Spirit could be possessed individually. Theirs was a new covenant with God, who had called them out of the world to share in the new community of the Holy Spirit. As participants in that new covenant, their life in the Church grew out of their life in the *Koinonia* and was dependent upon it. Thus St. Paul reminds his Corinthian brethren:

It was God . . . who Himself called you into fellowship with His Son and in His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord . . . (I Cor. 1:9, Robertson and Plummer).

The *Koinonia* is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is not man's creation. One must enter it with the same attitude with which one comes to God: with repentance and confession in the heart and on the lips. But the mystery of this fellowship is such that when one is drawn into it as a sinner, one finds himself accepted as a Christian brother and as a child of God. Love is the reality of the Christian *Koinonia*, but its source is God and not the good will of men. The Church is the creation, not of man's will to have a church, but of the primary relation between God and man. It is in this sense that we must understand the love, *agape*, of Christian communion. Freely and spontaneously given, it relates those that share it in an abiding community wherein the fullest development of individual gifts is fostered, while the meaning of existence is interpreted in terms of that *agape*. This is the unique character of the *Koinonia*: it embodies the kind of love wherein freedom and selfhood are affirmed and most fully realized in corporate community. The early Christians found no difficulty in both *belonging* to God through the holy fellowship and yet most truly possessing

<sup>3</sup> L. S. Thornton, *The Common Life in the Body of Christ* (London: Dacre Press, 1941), pp. 1 ff.

themselves as members of that faith-trust community. Like Aristotle's man, they could be happy and bear all the chances of life becomingly, because they could not be separated from the love of God, which had searched them out and had quieted their deepest fears.

One of the sources of great sadness in our world is the fact that modern man has no home, nor is "at home" in the world he knows. There is poignant truth in Thomas Wolfe's theme that *You Can't Go Home Again*, because *home* involves more than the physical surroundings of one's youth. The Hebrews were forever reminding themselves that they were "strangers" and "sojourners" in the land, as their fathers had been before them. Man, the pilgrim, looks for a city whose builder and founder is God. But the Christian pilgrimage has not been without its way station of faith along the road where the Church, as *Koinonia*, sustains the traveler in the ongoing community of faith. To be sure, the Christian *Koinonia* is not a static community of fixed relations, even in love. It is a living fellowship where men grow in grace. The *agape* experienced in coming to Christian faith cannot be mechanically incorporated into the believer's relations with himself and with others. He must accept and share the gift within this fellowship. St. Paul reminds us that the greatest of all the *charismata* (gifts of the Holy Spirit) is "God's love which has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit [which] has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). While that love is given and shared, it can never be claimed as a simple human achievement. It belongs to those that neither try to possess it alone nor to make it their shield of righteousness. It is present in those who are "as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

It is true, however, that the same *agape* that brings the believer to a new life in faith has established a historical community where all men, even in anxiety, may look and live beyond the tragedy of their historical moment. Within

that community, a power is available to live through every affliction—"imprisonments, tumults, labors"—with quiet confidence. He that lives in Christ is never free of the temptation to sin and of the danger of separation, but he that has known the love of God can never quite forget the healing fellowship that restores the sinner. Every sin, every occasion for repentance and return, becomes an opportunity for deeper self-understanding and more profound thanksgiving to God.

The modern emphasis upon self-fulfillment as a goal for living stands in danger of becoming only a pious hope, unless there is equal emphasis upon the kind of community that fosters mutual self-fulfillment. The rigors of economic and social deprivation, and the wounds aggravated by an environment that does not care, seriously limit any change for the better in the individual. Those that work in the fields of social science and human understanding are beginning to recognize this fact by their "team work" approach as helpers. Thus social workers, psychologists, doctors, and ministers, among others, are finding not only that the patient benefits from this varied approach, but also that, with the specialists working as a team, it is more likely that the whole man will be kept in mind. But much psychiatry is still involved in a common illusion of this culture: that "changed" individuals can sustain their improvement, while living in the midst of destructive society. The attitude, suggested by the title of Niebuhr's book *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, is still widespread. Even within Christianity, this sectarian influence has obscured the real work of the Church. Where the Church has become simply the department of religion in our common life rather than the heart and conscience of society, its moral pronouncements are likely to have little influence in changing the social climate. The Church is more than a repository of moral values. It is a common life in the Body of Christ. Fortunately, the brand of preaching that exhorts a kind of individualistic discipleship is beginning to give

way to a life-in-the-holy-fellowship concern. The Christian emphasis upon selfhood is derived, not from the perspective of man in isolation, but of man in communion—where his total being meets and responds to others in that fellowship.

Personal values are so much a part of the Hebrew-Christian tradition that they easily can be overlooked. The recovery of man's wholeness, or salvation, is the proper work of the Church. But it stems from God's action rather than from man's concern with "personal values." Gilson, the French Roman Catholic philosopher, has said, "We are persons because we are the work of a person." To be sure, personal terms have limitations when we use them in reference to the Creator and sustainer of the universe. The word *God* refers to more than can be contained in our concept of personhood, but faith has always assumed that man's response in personal terms refers to that in God that is personal. Hence, the ultimate Christian symbol, the Trinity, is cast in personal terms, and it represents an effort to picture the deepest meaning of community where every personal life is supported and transcended. Here man discovers that self-fulfillment and community are one in the divine ground of existence. In the world God works through community. It is evident that real community is impossible apart from genuine selfhood. Hence, any society that begins by destroying personal values will end by destroying itself. This is true not only of totalitarian countries, but also of any "enlightened nation" or group that makes a fetish of conformity.

Indeed, one might say that for the Christian every social organization should be judged by the degree of freedom and personhood that it affords. An emphasis on the community or the group as an end in itself could serve to crush the integrity and spontaneity of the individual. Here the nature of the Church as *Koinonia* is crucial. The common life created by the Holy Spirit restores and strengthens every individual in terms of his essentially personal expressions—

his freedom and his selfhood. This is personally attested today by countless men and women who have suffered under oppression. Their witness, like that of the blind man who was healed by Christ, bears the authority of evident authenticity: "One thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25).

In his remarkable account of slave labor in Russia, Pastor Gollwitzer tells how the Communists attempted to destroy every expression of individuality in their prisoners. They searched their victims constantly "because any private life is robbery against the community." This is the logical outcome of a social system in which "human material" is always exploited for the "good" of society. During captivity, Pastor Gollwitzer and his companions were sustained by a faith in which their individuality was constantly renewed. The uniqueness of each person was deepened through the response of others and in the unbroken, though distant, love of their brethren at home. Wherever there is an "I," there is also a "Thou" that gives life to that "I" by response. On the deepest level, every "I" is a gift in response to the Eternal "Thou." It is only in a community of grace and mutual self-giving that humanity is fully realized.

It is interesting to note that many psychiatrists today regard such basic personality disorders as homosexuality and narcissism, as character manifestations rather than as unalterable biologically fixed attitudes, and that these disturbances tend to disappear when confidence is regained in genuine interpersonal exchange and the character disorder is resolved. Hence, the kind of relationships that the community affords the individual determines to some extent the degree of selfhood possible to that individual as a person; and the degree to which the individual is aware of himself as an independent and distinct person determines his ability to enter into real community.

The vicious circle between individual and community

failure has been broken by the action of God in setting the Church in the midst of the world. The Gospel gathers those that hear and those that see in a kingdom of responding love where, in hearing and in seeing, the miracle of creation is continued. Here both the individual and the community are caught up and transformed within the divine Trinity within the creating, redeeming, and sustaining love of God. Man's deepest realization of himself, then, is possible here where the healing power of communion flows from that love which he encounters in nature and in the depths of his own soul, and supremely in God as the reconciling Christ.

The corporate significance of personality as well as individual selfhood has found expression in the Christian *Koinonia*. The early Christians began to call the Church the "Body of Christ." For them it was a living organism where, *in Christ*, they continued the new creation that God has set in the midst of the world. For them it lived and had substance and historical reality in the community of those who had experienced resolution of their anxiety in Christian faith. They shared the new life, beyond alienation, in the Church, in its prayer, worship, sacraments, and renewing faith. There, in communion, their solidarity was a living reality. Khomiakoff, the Russian theologian, has expressed this character of the Christian *Koinonia* in the following passage:

No one is saved alone; he who is saved, is saved in the Church, as a member of her, and in unity with all her other members. If anyone believes, he is in the communion of faith; if he loves he is in the communion of love; if he prays he is in the communion of prayer.

The Christian communion embraces man and society in a corporate fellowship, which is constantly being renewed by the uniting and redeeming love of God. Its *Koinonia* is

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Lawrence Phillips in *Anglo-Catholic Congress Report* (London: Dacre Press), III, 14.

the basis both for the development of personality and for the social solidarity of all men. This uniting fellowship swept across the ancient world and, for a number of centuries, gave unity to an otherwise crumbling civilization. Indeed, it became the basis of a new civilization which, although weakened and seriously qualified by man's experience in modern history, still holds the key to the unity and solidarity so tragically needed by divided and isolated man today. St. Paul's Trinitarian "Grace" bears the note of significant need that might well be the prayer of every man in this age of anxiety: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all" (II Cor. 13:14, AV).

#### THE DYNAMICS OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

St. Paul reminds us that "the Kingdom of God is not in words but in power." Words—"brotherhood," "peace," etc.—can not heal the deepest hurt of modern man. Alone and helpless, he looks again for the saving power of community. His desperate need to belong somewhere is evident in the astonishing success of collectivism. Communism and Fascism reveal the danger of man's abysmal loneliness. They are philosophies of desperation, which promise to fill the huge vacuum created by the impotence of words and the lack of community. That pain of loneliness and uncertainty has left modern man ready to purchase certainty, even the certainty of herd conformity, at any price. Despite the accomplishments of our technical civilization, with its emphasis upon mass production and individualism, we are discovering that we are strangers and alone in our cities of identical houses and labor-saving gadgets. Neither suburban "heavens" nor the benefits of economic prosperity can hide our emptiness. In such a world, it is not surprising that the promises of comradeship that the Communists hawk have been bought by some.

It is also significant that our deprivations of real community have driven many, within the Church and without, to explore again the meaning of group life. Under the stress of war and imprisonment and the threat even of extinction, Christian communities based on a common life have again come into being. In war devastated Europe, as well as in the impoverished areas of a Harlem or a Jersey City, the Church has begun to find itself again.<sup>5</sup> In the violent years of modern history, the forced associations in prison camps and the common enterprises in the face of danger have in some instances been transformed into real communities by corporate prayer and Bible reading. This renewal is evident in the spiritual journey of a Karl Stern. The story of his life, which came to maturity in Hitlerite Germany, bears testimony of the power of the spirit to renew life and create community out of the nothingness left over from man's violence. His book, *The Pillar of Fire*, is a heartening witness to the reality of the community of grace in a world that seems convinced that it is God-forsaken.

While these signs of recovered community are hopeful, they are not likely to produce great change unless this problem of lost community becomes a major concern for many people. It is encouraging that educators and members of other professions concerned with human relations have made a good beginning in this field with the development of the National Training Laboratory in Group Dynamics at Bethel, Maine. During the past decade scores of representatives from most fields of American life have gathered there to study the processes of group life. The "laboratory," in this case, consists of those that are participating, and the method of study provides the opportunity to observe not only what a group accomplishes by way of goals, etc., but also how the members of the group relate to each other as they go

<sup>5</sup> I refer to the "new life" movements in Germany, France, and Britain; and to the "open rectory" work of Episcopal priests in Jersey City; and to the work in East Harlem Protestant Parish.

about their work. Here is a perspective much needed in Church groups. How often a "Christian" committee plunges through its tasks in rigid "unchristian" ways? How often are our leaders bewildered when results are disappointing and interest wanes?

To live through an experience in which one is forced to observe both himself and others as they relate to one another, and to face the necessity of correcting one's own impressions and judgment against those of one's teammates, is to participate in a deeper way in common life, because one moves in the direction of a more sensitive and accurate awareness of himself and others. This deeper participation is urgently needed in our parish life. Christian community cannot be merely proclaimed. It must also be demonstrated as the power of God unto salvation.

It is significant that the secular disciplines have become concerned with *Group Dynamics*. The word *dynamics* suggests the atmosphere of the laboratory where the physicist is observing the action of force on bodies. Insofar as the interpreters of Group Dynamics wish to keep their status as natural scientists, they have insisted that their work retain this kinship with physics. This approach becomes difficult to maintain, however, when one recalls that a group consists of human beings, and not of determinate objects. However predictable man's behavior in a group may be, his freedom is a factor that cannot be left out of consideration. With this precaution in mind, however, the laboratory study of groups in action yields rich insights. For instance, Kurt Lewin's studies revealed that the acceptance of a new set of values and beliefs can *never* be brought about in single units, but only by accepting belongingness to the group as a whole.<sup>6</sup> This speaks directly to those who insist that Christianity is only a moral exercise for the valiant!

<sup>6</sup> Kurt Lewin, *Resolving Social Conflicts* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), p. 59.

The word *dynamics* is very much in the vocabulary of the New Testament. There the expression, “the *dunamis* (power) of God,” is used frequently to describe the power of God invisibly present in the Church assembled. The evidences of godly power are abundant in that early Church. Renewal of life, experienced in a fellowship beyond guilt and despair, transformed a scattered and frightened people into a sustaining community whose fruits issued in faith, hope, and love. Indeed, one may regard the Epistles of St. Paul as an effort to interpret the dynamics of that amazing power that the Church had already experienced. The practical result of faith in Christ was the establishment of a new community, in which the members were constantly being restored to one another and to God. Their “group dynamics” was the power of God in their fellowship; their “communication” resulted from their Holy Communion; and although there was a place within this early Church for diversities of gifts (or roles played), it was the same Holy Spirit who sustained them all. In other words, the Christian community is the work of the Holy Spirit.

While the advocates of group dynamics have gathered impressive data on the functioning and the malfunctioning of groups, they seem to be less concerned with the spiritual forces that mold a group together. What is it that makes members of a group of one mind, and of one heart, and of one spirit? There is a tendency in the field of human relations to insist that individual needs alone constitute group cohesiveness and that, therefore, the notion of being caught up in a spirit greater than that of the individual is an illusion. This is somewhat qualified by those who regard their group life as being based on the assumption that “democracy is a way of life.” It seems obvious, however, that the democratic way of life involves more than the application of techniques. It involves an act of faith about the ultimate meaning of life and a commitment to certain kinds of human

behavior that are "democratic," as opposed to others that are "undemocratic." Indeed, one of the deeply felt concerns of those in group work is the possibility that their insights and techniques may be used to manipulate and coerce people. It would seem that this problem will continue to plague any sincere person who regards man as a determinate object whose freedom is an illusion. Wherever freedom is destroyed, either by pathology or by ideology, man's status as a person is diminished, and he is reduced to the level of a thing that invites manipulation.

The dynamic of Christian community is based on the common assumption that all life is religious, having its roots in the creative work of God. The *Koinonia* is a faith community whose character is drawn, not from its degree of human intimacy, but from its communion with God. It exists in Christ under the definite and objective conditions laid down at Pentecost; namely, continuing in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. In contrast to secular community, the Church lives for the proclamation of its faith, and its life and worship strive to be a living witness to the Lord of its faith until His coming again. Where there is no reluctance to declare a faith, the problem of cohesion, meaning, and purpose provide no embarrassment. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church and the action involved in sacramentally recalling God's mighty acts in the history of salvation, issue in a common life in which the keynote is expectancy.

Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come (II Cor. 5:17).

This is the promise of St. Paul, born not of pious hope, but of confident experience in the community of the Holy Spirit. That community is the deepest need of modern man.

Every community has its own symbols of communica-

tion, as well as its own liturgy, which is the public manifestation of its faith in action. Genuine community is possible only when its symbols provide an effective means of communication between its members. It is clear that, in the process of being drawn together, human beings learn the symbols and liturgical acts that express their common life and faith. The new member of a regiment is "traditioned" with tales of his outfit told over and over. A part of every group initiation is that *living into* the spirit and life of the group. The Jewish family recalls with moving action and liturgy the great event in Hebrew history, "When Israel went out of Egypt!"

The significance of this act of deliverance, as well as the meaning of freedom for the Hebrew, is assured a place in daily life by the specific actions that are directed in Deuteronomy. There not only are the commandments to be laid upon their hearts as signs upon their hands and as frontlets between their eyes, but also the meaning of those actions is recited in order that succeeding generations may join the chorus:

"We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand . . ." (Deuteronomy 6:21).

The Church also communicates its faith by holy actions—the continual living rehearsal of the mighty acts of God in history. By acting out the holy events in her life, the Church makes living memorial of her existence. This is no mere use of symbol to designate objects. There is a living, intrinsic relation between the symbol, let us say, of the Holy Communion, and the fact of being in holy communion. Thus liturgy is the living expression of Christian community. It is the work of the people, the concretizing of their faith. Perhaps this understanding of liturgy will find fuller illustration as we discuss worship.

WORSHIP AND COMMUNITY

What life have you if you have not life together?  
There is no life that is not lived in community,  
And no community not lived in the praise of God.<sup>7</sup>

The poet suggests that worship is the heart of community and that real life is impossible apart from that worshipping community. The Church is a fellowship of thanksgiving, where the walls of loneliness are shattered by spontaneous self-giving in praise of God. Its note of joy is the measure of its freedom *from* moral "oughts" to freedom *for* a life of praise and thanksgiving:

O come, let us sing unto the Lord;  
let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation  
(Psalm 95:1).

In worship, man responds in the depths of his being. Religious symbols become the bearers of that experience of mystery and awe that transcends ordinary experience. Otto Rank has said that man is born and dies "beyond psychology," but he can live beyond it only through vital religious experience. The Bible expresses the same truth in simpler words:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out . . . not knowing where he was to go (Hebrews 11:8).

Life does not afford us the psychological certainty which we would like to have. If we walk at all, we walk by faith. Worship is the wellspring of that faith-walking. In genuine outgoing worship, man is in touch with the deepest source of his being; his inner splits are healed; and his isolation is overcome. An offering less than a heartfelt "I" response to the divine "Thou" will not suffice here. Every pretense and

<sup>7</sup>T. S. Eliot, "Choruses from the Rock," *The Complete Poems and Plays* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1952), pp. 97 ff. Used by permission of the publisher.

evasion, every mask, is stripped away when one meets God "face to face." The astonishing truth that comes from such an encounter is that we live beyond it. That is the gift of life that the worshipper knows in his innermost being. That is the secret that Jacob discovered after a dark night of wrestling.

I have seen God face to face  
And yet my life is preserved (Genesis 32:30).

It would seem that many of the same forces are at work in genuine worship and in therapy. Both involve emancipation of the self from consuming egocentricity and a growing sense of communication within the self and with the world. Both manifest the power of interpersonal relations to draw the individual out of isolation and into community. Worship re-establishes communion with the deepest source of community—the ultimate "I-Thou" relation, a relation that transcends every human relation. Worship involves community, and corporate worship enhances the sense of belongingness and of individual worth that, as Chaplain Otis Rice has said, "comes from participation in a ritual, an observance, a group experience, which transcends individual loneliness and isolation."<sup>8</sup> Some years ago, H. Flanders Dunbar, whose work in psychosomatic medicine has opened many new vistas, suggested that pastors and priests could best further the cause of man's health by devoting their energy to the development of new religious techniques of prayer, meditation, and liturgy that would heal by making man conscious of wholeness; that is, by providing him with the opportunity to experience unity within himself and with God. Such a suggestion is worthy of serious consideration. It must be borne in mind, however, that worship is response to God, in whose strength man's anxious self seeking is shattered and in whose mercy alone man's life is restored. The motive for

<sup>8</sup> Otis Rice, an essay in *Psychiatry and the War*, ed. Frank J. Sladen (Springfield, Ill.: C. C. Thomas, 1943), p. 210.

worship, therefore, is thanksgiving. That motive comes with a radical shift from prideful self-concern to a faith-trust relation with God. It cannot be produced by techniques of prayer.

Cyril Richardson has written that ". . . in sacrifice is comprehended the whole mystery of worship."<sup>9</sup> In common usage the word *sacrifice* connotes an action by which one voluntarily gives up some possession in order to gain that which he conceives to be a greater good. We can readily see how sacrifice is involved in growth toward emotional maturity. In order to become a man, *i.e.* mature, one must "put away childish things." Infantile dependency must give way to a self-strength that comes from standing on one's own feet. Capricious and fragile moods must be given up for a greater tolerance of frustration; indeed, the ways of childhood must ultimately be sacrificed in order to be mature. But sacrifice in the religious sense involves more than calculated steps toward a greater goal. He who would be renewed before God is moved to offer himself along with his gift, that losing his life, he may find it! This sacrifice grows out of the death of repentance. It is an offering made not from the heights of self-importance, but from the brokenness that man knows in God's judgment. Those that have experienced renewal, either through therapy or religion, are apt to recognize something in the latter, as belonging to their own spiritual history.

More strictly, sacrifice refers to the making of sacred offerings whereby that which is offered becomes both the means of expressing thanksgiving to God and the vehicle of His assurance of acceptance and grace to the suppliant. The bread and wine of Holy Communion in the Christian Church are striking illustrations of sacrifice in this sense. From ancient times sacrifice has been a normal part of the Hebrew-Christian worship of God. It must be kept in mind

<sup>9</sup> C. C. Richardson, "The Formal Rites and Ceremonies of the Church," in *The Church and Mental Health*, ed. Paul Maves (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 98.

that the symbols (bread and wine, etc.) become the bearers of man's self-offering in order that he may recover that unity with God that has been lost in sin. The offerings of the Hebrews and the Christians, when handed over (made sacred) to God, symbolize thereby the way in which the self is handed over wholly and spiritually in worship. That which is sacrificed is renewed in holiness by the action of God's spirit that now dwells in it. Thus is fulfilled the promise of God: newness of being in Christ!

Psychiatry has taught us that unresolved guilt and anxiety exact their own tribute or "sacrifice" by way of unproductive activity in the life of the individual. Excessive handwashing is commonly considered to be symptomatic of unresolved guilt, whether imagined or real. It is an unconsciously motivated activity, dictated by an uneasy conscience. It reminds us that sacrifice may be motivated by destructive attitudes, as well as by responsive faith. Christian sacrifice, on the other hand, springs from the experience of release from anxiety and guilt, together with their accompanying alienation from God. Here before the altar the Christian, after honest self-searching in the presence of Him "from whom no secrets are hid," offers himself as "a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice." The Church, following the New Testament, added an emphatic note of social relevance when she insisted that a man first must seek reconciliation with his brother and then bring his gift before the altar. The Christian sacrifice, the Eucharist, is an offering of the whole community. It is alien to individualism. It is a revolutionary force that promises to destroy every *status quo* built upon iniquity. Its force will not be spent until the worshiping community becomes the Kingdom of God, and *Judgment* runs "down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

Intrinsic in and fundamental to Christian worship is its distinctive action to carry through the resolve begun in sacrifice. Worship includes not only what we declare with

our lips, but also what we show forth in our lives through service and humble working before God. All this, and nothing less, comprises the liturgy of the people. The writers of the New Testament were in daily contact with the "new sacrifices," wrought by a community at one in Christ. Forgiveness and renewal, pardon and peace—these were visible sacraments of that new power at work among them. These are the "first-fruits" of that promised Kingdom of God which is beginning to come in the Church.

It is in this light that we must understand the healing work of worship and sacrament. Within the Church the great sacraments came to be distinctive symbols, wherein the gift of salvation in Christ was acted out. Here promises became reality. In baptism and in penance, the Church reclaimed for God those lost in sin. In the ministry to the sick (the Laying on of Hands and Holy Unction), as in the Holy Eucharist, the Church acted out the conditions of recovered wholeness and restored communion beyond separations. Thus in the ministry to the sick, the Church through prayer and the use of oil blessed by the bishops (or more simply by laying on of hands) provided a tangible contact with the holy community and with God. The intention in the Church's ministry to the sick was the removal of that which separated a man from God and the opening of the way to his receiving the restorative grace freely given. In this sense, recovered health is a by-product of that new relation to God, and St. Paul's sentiments become a prayer:

None of us lives to himself,  
and none of us dies to himself.  
If we live, we live to the Lord,  
and if we die, we die to the Lord;  
so then, whether we live or whether we die,  
we are the Lord's (Romans 14:7-8).

It is not our task here to enter into a discussion of how the sacraments operate, but it seems safe to assume that

where they have been held in high esteem in the Church, they have been regarded as *special instruments* of God's grace, which is received by *faith* in the believer. Within the Christian ethos these sacramental acts have become the bearers of God's healing and restorative grace. Even in a world of the tragic division of natural and spiritual powers, the sacraments remained as unifying symbols that employed bread and wine, water and light, and all the powers of nature to bestow spiritual meaning and healing power. It is interesting to note that Jung, in his discussion of the relation of Christian symbols to the unconscious, points out that even though Luther rejected some of the sacramental interpretations of the medieval Church, he held fast to the immediately effective and sensuous presence in taking the bread and wine in Holy Communion. Thus, when his colleagues were moving in the direction of a lesser emphasis upon the sacrament as a simple memorial, Luther insisted upon its character as a vital and present union with Christ. Jung writes:

He perceived in it not merely a token, but the actual sensuous reality with its contingent and immediate experience; these were for him an indispensable religious necessity. He therefore claimed the actual presence of the body and blood of Christ in the communion.<sup>10</sup>

Carroll Wise has said that the reality of religious symbols grows out of "an intrinsic association between the experience and the form of expression, an association grasped by insight or faith."<sup>11</sup> This dynamic relation between symbol and reality is evident in the Christian sacraments. We have already discussed baptism and penance as sacraments that

<sup>10</sup> Carl Jung, *Psychological Types* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1926), p. 84.

<sup>11</sup> Carroll Wise, *Religion in Illness and Health* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1942), p. 185.

mediate, beyond tragic anxiety and sin, the recovered relation to God. The Church's ministry to the sick and the Holy Eucharist continue and strengthen that resolution of anxiety by maintaining the fact of holy communion.

The Church, through her symbols and her fellowship, is equipped to embrace the life of man from birth to death. From the picture of the Church in the New Testament, as St. Paul and the Evangelists describe its life and prayer, as well as St. James' description of the elders at prayer beside the sick, we see the beginning of a holy community that set out with magnificent spirit to minister to the real needs of every man. Again and again through the centuries, the Church has been recalled to that early vision and significant ministry. The following words of Luther portray the fresh hope, inspired by such a holy fellowship and sacraments in one who knew the full agony of anxiety:

If anyone be in despair, if he be distressed by his sinful conscience or terrified by death, or have any other burden on his heart and desire to be rid of them all, let him go joyfully to the sacrament of the altar and lay down his grief in the midst of the congregation and seek help from the entire company of the spiritual body . . . Therefore, the immeasurable grace and mercy of God are given us in this sacrament that we may there lay down all misery and tribulation and put it on the congregation and especially on Christ, and may joyfully strengthen and comfort ourselves and say: "Though I am a sinner and have fallen, though this or that misfortune has befallen me, I will go to the sacrament to receive a sign from God that I have on my side Christ's righteousness, life and sufferings, with all holy angels and all the blessed in heaven and all pious men on earth. If I die, I am not alone in death; if I suffer, they suffer with me. I have shared all my misfortune with

Christ and the saints, since I have a sure sign of their love toward me.”<sup>12</sup>

#### HEALTH AND HOLY COMMUNION

Man's lack of health is essentially a disruption of unity within himself, with his world, and with the ground of his being, God. Every psychiatric classification is a description of the shatteredness of human existence, of man's isolation, and of his tragic effort to close the gap that sets him apart. The neurotic suffers from an intolerable anxiety that transforms the simplest human relation into a compulsive struggle in which the manipulation of others affords only temporary respite from his own insecurity. The paranoid and the schizophrenic have become rigid in their rejection of community: one with the fixed notion that the outside world is hostile and persecutory, and the other with a tendency to withdraw and to become preoccupied with himself. We have noted from time to time the community's participation in this tendency to divide man—spirit from matter in philosophy, mind from body in medicine, and body from soul in religion. Even in the care of the sick we have tended to intensify loneliness by almost obsessive rituals of isolation in hospitals and sick rooms. An illustration of this tendency has been the prevailing custom, in our efficient hospitals, of separating mother and child soon after birth. Thus, one of the first experiences of the infant is that of isolation. Fortunately, there is a growing tendency, where possible, to keep mother and child in closer contact. When this is extended to profound preparation for and adjustment to the delivery of a child, the shock of birth is partially absorbed.

Anxiety is the inevitable component of isolation. The child at birth is thrust into a world quite different from that which he knew in the protective experience of the womb.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Luther, *Works* (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Co. and Castle Press, 1915), II, 18.

His helplessness and dependency set off reactions that are later to characterize anxiety in adult behavior. If it happens that birth and early infancy are accompanied by no genuine love and affection from significant people around him, there is every likelihood that he will soon adopt a pattern of compliance or aggression to protect himself against that world "he never made" and in which he feels alone. But since such behavior is designed to punish a hostile world, it is motivated by much hostility and is accompanied by guilt feelings. Indeed, behind neurotic behavior in general, there is a basic insecurity of the individual that is determined both by his reaction to primal anxiety and by the reflected appraisals of those people intimately associated with him. Malignant interpersonal relations in the family and in society are the breeding grounds of that anxiety, guilt, and hostility that ultimately wreak havoc upon the unity of man's personality.

In religious terms we have held that primal anxiety accompanies man's leap into existence. Man's harmony within himself and with the ground of his being is symbolized by his essential goodness in creation. His disruption and contradictory behavior in existence is the *fact* of his sin. Man's fall is not an event that took place once and for all in Adam and Eve; it is a part of the experience of every man. In anxiety man is tempted to secure himself by desperate means against the primordial insecurity that he feels. He resorts to conscious and unconscious devices to hide from himself the terrifying truth of his helplessness. Thus primal anxiety that might be resolved in faith is, instead, transformed into the driving anxiety of man's life in sin.

Two factors relating to the functioning of the whole personality seem to be well-established facts in psychoanalytic practice. The first is that behavior has meaning. A pattern repeated again and again is meaningful in terms of the history and responses of a given personality. The second formulation is that unconscious motives play their part in human activity. The given pattern may relate to an indi-

vidual's unconscious desire to punish or to submit to the authoritarian figures in his life. Therapists have discovered that health for the individual, suffering from ambivalent motives, lies in the direction of bringing together his conscious and unconscious life in a corrective interpersonal experience that permits him gradually to see the meaning of his behavior and to regain communication with the various parts of his total personality; in short, to recover his unity and to resolve his hostility and guilt.

It is in the light of these facts about man's health and of these insights of psychiatry into its preservation that we have interpreted religious symbols and that we turn now to the sacrament of Holy Communion. We must emphasize that a symbol, by definition, grows out of an *intrinsic association* between the experience and its form of expression. Its meaning, including its emotional and intellectual factors, is grasped by faith and insight, which are functions of the total personality. Religious symbols are not restrictive scientific formulae; they are grounds of participating reality, which convey meaning to the whole man. The ancient Church healed man's brokenness by providing him with specific means to confess and to experience forgiveness of his sin, and by incorporating him into the *Koinonia*. That holy fellowship through the centuries has provided a healing emotional experience in which believers have been bound together in faith and hope, laughter and tears.

It is informative to compare the ancient Church's understanding of the Eucharist with later interpretations. The sense of unity and solidarity in the ancient world made it quite natural to experience the *holy* in the elements of bread and wine, quite apart from elaborate explanations as to how the holy is present. But it would seem that by the time the late medieval Church promulgated the doctrine of transubstantiation, the ancient, unconscious unity of spirit and nature was already beginning to break down. Some writers suggest that the anxiety that accompanied the break-up of

the medieval synthesis was the driving force behind the elaborate doctrinal formulations. At any rate, the doctrine of transubstantiation appears to be a conscious effort to deny what in fact was beginning to be present in the unconscious—namely, doubt and uncertainty about the sacrament. Indeed, the whole late medieval emphasis upon doctrinal exactitude and elaborate schemes to gain merit may be viewed in one aspect as frantic efforts to still the anxiety and the doubt that was springing from man's innermost being. In this light, the Reformation and the Renaissance were in part further outward manifestations of these rising doubts. The actual presence of Christ in the Eucharist became increasingly difficult to maintain in a world that was losing its sense of unity and solidarity.

Psychologically, we stand on the opposite side of the late medieval problem in understanding the sacrament of Holy Communion. Our hearts yearn for the efficacy of this sacrament, but our minds are still indentured slaves to rationalism. There are many signs of change. In recent years, most of the Protestant churches have moved in the direction of a high and emotionally profound regard for Holy Communion, while still consciously rejecting it as a specific locus of the Holy. In the Anglican Communion and in certain Roman Catholic and Protestant "new life" communities, the Eucharist has become the focus of renewal and the heart of social concern. Indeed, while the theologians still debate the great issues of reunion, a quiet revolution has been taking place throughout the Church in which liturgical revival, biblical theology, and communal rebirth find their common quickening in this sacrament. It is possible that those who have lived in brokenness are now unconsciously reaching out for this experience of oneness; but the problem remains that they are still the children of a Cartesian world in which the very idea of sacrament poses real difficulties.

The Holy Communion is a symbol full of intimate association with the deepest experience and needs of man's

life. The bread and wine used are themselves products of nature, which become bearers of spiritual meaning and saving power by their very dedication in the sacrament. As food, given by a loving Father, they are associated with love and endowed with a positive self value. Menninger has pointed out that being given food is the first experience of love the child understands and that there is a significant relation between this fact and the Christian sacrament.<sup>13</sup> Love precedes genuine self-regard in every area of man's life: Thus, "we love Him because He first loved us."

Holy Communion is first of all *corporate* action, in which the whole of creation participates. It is God's way of gathering His own unto Himself again, and it is once and for all centered in human experience by the specific direction: "Take, eat, this is my Body which is broken for you." In obedience to this command, man, as a participant, joins his own creative powers to God's action, and finds thereby his deepest fulfillment.

The sacrament is not, therefore, just contemplation nor pious meditation, but *action* toward the realization of man's salvation. In terms of psychodrama, man acts out the conditions of his recovered health. St. Thomas Aquinas spoke of the Eucharist as "re-presenting" the actual sacrifice of Christ in such a way that man participates in it and derives benefits from it. This emphasis is retained in the Roman missal in the prayer for the feast of Corpus Christi:

O Lord, we beseech thee, be pleased to grant unto thy Church the gifts of unity and peace, which by these offered gifts are mystically signified: through Jesus Christ our Lord . . .<sup>14</sup>

There are at least two broad therapeutic benefits which are ours in Holy Communion: we offer a *sacrifice* in which

<sup>13</sup> Karl Menninger, *Love Against Hate* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1943), p. 278.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted by Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Dacre Press, 1945), p. 248.

we experience expiation for hostility and guilt, and we receive loving *communion* in which the healing of disrupted and broken lives is possible. As we have noted frequently in this study, hostility and guilt are two inseparable parts of man's distorted existence. They must be dealt with in realistic terms, or else they continue to play their role in the unconscious. To give them up is, in a sense, to give up a part of the self, and this can be accomplished only when there is a shift of the whole personality from anxiety to Christian faith. It is the goal and purpose of self-examination, confession, and the preparation that must precede one's coming to Holy Communion to secure this profound change. Here, before the altar, such a sacrifice requires a willingness to give up the self with its hostility and guilt, in order to be made whole again. The benefit of the sacrament is real only when the sacrifice exacts a genuine offering. The gifts of the holy sacrifice symbolize the offering of the self wholly, even as Christ offered Himself. Here one is brought to the deepest realization of those words that are the very heart of the Gospel:

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it (Matthew 16:25, AV).

#### SUMMARY

Basically, the Eucharist makes real the experience of atonement (or at-one-ment) in the Christian Church. The profound benefit of the sacrament is "at-oneness" with Christ and, through Him, with oneself and with the world. Where the experience of Holy Communion is a reality, man is in fact no longer a slave to alienation and anxiety. In that moment the unqualified love of God and the spontaneity of living are his. He is at one not only within himself, but with angels and archangels and with the whole Creation that shares that fullness of the glory of God. This is God's answer

to the tragedy and brokenness of our lives. This is healing for our deepest fear, for as the poet Donne has said,

Who can fear death this night  
That hath had the Lord of life  
In his hand today?

## LIVING THROUGH ANXIETY

Anxiety is the condition of our living. It is a part of our freedom and of our striving for selfhood. It is tragic only in the sense that in existence it tends to become the driving force behind our distorted lives of sin and guilt, anger and alienation. Christianity is a way of living through anxiety by faith. Its locus is the community of those who have responded to the saving act of God in Christ. The mystery of that "blessed company" is its gift of faith for anxiety, where faith restores and love heals the wounds of anxiety. No man lives beyond anxiety; but every man lives within the reach of God's recovery of man. A familiar hymn in Christendom, *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, invokes the Holy Spirit, whose gifts include "blessed unction from above"—the only healing for man's disfigurement. The petition begins at the right place and asks for the right gift:

Anoint and cheer our soiled face  
With the abundance of Thy grace.

The soiled face of modern man looks anxiously for peace where there is no peace, for health and salvation in gods that have no capacity to heal or to save. He cannot live without his civilization, and certainly one of his most serious problems is learning to live within it. More and more modern man is forced into loneliness and isolation, and deeper anxiety is the unfailing component of that isolation. The primal anxiety of existence and neurotic anxiety are fused in the process of living, with the total result that life

becomes driven by a relentless compulsion that defies effective control.

Man is anxious, and the deepest sting is his fear that his suffering is ultimately meaningless. His anxiety is compounded of separation from God and of the distortions of an exacting and anxiety-ridden environment. It leaves him with the conviction that existence itself is painful and meaningless. Man cries out in the dark night of his soul for deliverance from this torment. He finds little to assuage his pain in the limited world of secularism; and even his worship of God may be frustrated by a diminished horizon that is a part of his anxious self-concern.

#### **RECOVERY OF THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT**

The answer to man's isolation is beginning to appear in the modern world's recovery of the life of the spirit. I use the word *recovery* because the idea of spirit (in the sense of breath, or wind, or energy), as the invisible basis of life, was a universal assumption in the ancient world. Both the writers of Genesis and the ancient Greek philosophers shared this assumption. There was no necessary dichotomy between spirit and matter in that ancient view, nor was the spirit confined in its manifestation to intelligence or ethereal phenomenon. The word spirit has always been man's way of designating vital force in action. It cannot be confined or limited, yet it finds expression in all creation. While some of the ancients actually identified spirit with God, most could have given assent to the statement: In spirit we live and move, and have our being.

The modern world of secularism, by implication if not by intent, has ignored this larger life of the spirit. It has tended to confine reality to physical matter and to disregard the wider implications of spiritual life. In our culture this has resulted in a distorted emphasis upon empirical facts that have been disengaged from the spiritual and religious

aspect of truth and value. Academic education has moved more and more in the direction of the accumulation of facts, while making little effort to relate these facts to ultimate meaning and truth. The image of our life thus produced has prompted some writers to call ours "a cut flower culture." This disjunctive, spectatorial attitude is one of the reasons why modern man is suffering from "a case of nerves!" Nerve ends must bear the burden of our contradictory existence if empiricism is the limit of our view of reality.

But there is a stirring in educational circles—indeed, in the whole realm of science—a tendency to look for correlative truth and value in the total area of man's living. A revolution has taken place in physical science with the removal of the division between energy and matter in man's view of reality. The Einstein equation,  $E = mc^2$ , means that energy and matter are perpetually interchangeable. This understanding calls for an entirely new, dynamic approach to truth: energy is matter in motion. The old Cartesian dualism is inadequate. Any view of reality must take into account this rediscovered note of unity and wholeness.

We have observed a similar revolution in psychosomatic medicine, where the spiritual and motivational side of man's life is related once more to his total functioning. Perhaps the most crucial factor in modern man's recovery of the spirit has been his excruciating loneliness and disintegration, as he has tried, apart from the life of the spirit, to withstand the blows of modern history. In war and the separations necessitated by it, in prison camps, and in states subjected to secret police methods, the recovery of the spirit and the spiritual life has become a necessity. The writer has heard of a small group of men that met regularly in Germany throughout the Hitlerite regime in the very teeth of Gestapo vigilance. Their only communication with one another was to read aloud the New Testament, the works of Goethe and Shakespeare, and to hear the music of Bach, but by this

they preserved the life of the spirit and were saved from despair.

Recovery of spirit is also recovery of wholeness. Throughout this study, we have noted the deep concern for wholeness in every approach to the problem of understanding human behavior. To experience release from anxiety is to recover a part of the personality that has been lost. To move in the direction of recovered faculties is again to approach wholeness—that state in which the recovered self relates spontaneously on every level of human existence. The idea of wholeness in modern thought conceives of man, neither as the sum of his integral parts nor as a physical body with spiritual faculties, but as a living entity whose thinking, willing, and acting are all expressions of his total being. Psychoanalysis has used this approach in order to understand the function of anxiety in man and to assist him in the recovery of health. The beginning of recovered wholeness is dramatically illustrated in the case of the woman whom Frieda Fromm-Reichmann describes in *Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy*.<sup>1</sup> This patient had failed to respond to ordinary therapy and had withdrawn to the extent of absolute muteness. Still the doctor visited her every day and continued to offer her a genuine relationship that demanded no particular response. Then one day, the doctor's charge blurted out, "I don't know why you keep trying. I'm not interested!" Negative as this seems, the therapist was encouraged because the patient had spoken, and she suggested that they continue on her (the doctor's) faith. A year and a half later, when she was really on the road to recovery, the patient recalled this experience as the turning point in her illness. Dr. Fromm-Reichmann had succeeded in convincing the woman that her personal interest was genuine and given without condition. The patient was able

<sup>1</sup> Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, *Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), pp. 110 ff.

to respond to that gift and to begin the crucial recovery of her wholeness.

It is important to note that in this case the happy outcome began with the quality of the relation offered to the patient. The physician gave more than the cold stones of efficient techniques. Her relation to this woman was characterized by a spiritual attitude that made it possible to give an unencumbered gift. This is how the Kingdom of God comes, not with fanfare and trumpets, but in that spiritual meeting in which creation is quietly restored. For the Christian the meaning of life is spiritual. It is discovered in relationship. The heart of the Christian message is the proclamation that God, the Spirit, is being made manifest in the realities of this world as He is supremely manifested in the person of Christ. The rediscovery of the Spirit by modern man—the recovery of the fullness and meaning of life in real meeting—is something of a recapitulation of the experience of the early Church. St. Paul discovered that the Spirit is found where the fruits of the Spirit are found—in love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. It is the Spirit who shapes and forms the new man beyond the ravages of anxiety. Recovered wholeness is another fruit of the Spirit.

#### PSYCHOTHERAPY AND CHRISTIAN FAITH

It should be clear, from what we have said, that psychotherapy and Christian faith have some common goals. Both are concerned with removing the blocks that keep man from self-realization. Both deal with the experience of anxiety and are concerned with providing relaxation of that anxiety in a new reformation of the whole person. Where there is neurotic distortion of interpersonal relations, the experience and techniques of psychotherapy may be necessary before Christian symbols can be meaningful. Psychoanalysis stands with the prophetic voice of the Hebraic-Christian tradition in challenging man to look to the real motives by which

he lives. Indeed, it is possible that God has raised up this voice of scrutiny in order to expose the false god made in man's own image. In that sense Nietzsche was right when he declared that God is dead. The old domesticated half gods must leave before the real God comes. In the business of expelling the half gods, psychotherapy has played a vital role. It has asked the same questions that Isaiah asked:

To whom then will you liken God,  
or what likeness compare with him? (*Isaiah 40:18*).

Man in his anxiety attempts to possess God, to shape Him as an idol and to use Him as a shield from the cold winds of reality. But God will not be possessed nor used. He hides from man. He forsakes him who would use Him. He will not become an object, for He is the God who specifically forbids images. As J. H. Oldham has said, ". . . we cannot talk about God. We can only talk to Him. Where God is concerned, the only language open to us is prayer."<sup>2</sup>

While psychoanalysis is an aid in exposing false gods, it is limited as a total view of life. Techniques that provide greater knowledge of the self cannot be elevated into schemes of salvation. Any science that has succumbed to the temptation of scientism (the elevation of relative truth to absolute truth) is simply another form of idolatry—the adoration of the mind by the mind. Psychotherapy should not attempt, nor should it be expected to attempt, the answering of religious questions. The task of psychotherapy lies in the direction of assisting and strengthening man's use of his own capacities to the end that his life may be more satisfying. Religious faith, on the other hand, is concerned with relating man at every level of his being to that ultimate Reality, "in whose service is perfect freedom."

The methods of psychotherapy have helped man to understand himself and his own struggle. They are means

<sup>2</sup>J. H. Oldham, *Life Is Commitment* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1952), p. 47.

of restoring the relation between motive and action. These same methods have produced rich insights about the way in which culture and conditioning shape personality. By analysis we are now able to chart the effect of environment. Even so, we should not permit this analytic attitude to obscure the fact that human beings fight their decisive battles within themselves. To say that man is largely influenced by his environment, is not to say that he is simply a passive object. The fact that he is able to assess in some measure his own involvement in the culture is evidence that man is still man, not a stick or stone. In the end, it is man's deciding that makes sense or chaos out of his relation to his world.

Secular psychiatry, although it would replace religion, will continue to be disturbed by man's guilt beyond guilt feelings and man's sin beyond neurotic aggression or compliance. The brokenness and deep disturbance in man's nature that is indicated by manifestations of sin and guilt cannot be healed simply by growth. Nor is human forgiveness strong enough to break the cycle of anger and retribution that reaches back through the generations to the origin of existence. That wound needs healing, beyond medical arts and beyond human therapy, in God, the Creator, in whose love alone man is restored. This therapy depends upon death and resurrection, judgment, repentance, forgiveness and newness of being in faith and love. Christ warned his disciples, "Without me you can do nothing." I take that to mean that all our striving, without faith in Christ, leads but to negation, to nothingness. Here we confront the tragedy of modern man, who is, as one novelist put it, "too sophisticated to believe in God and too frightened to believe in nothing."

From the Christian viewpoint, man's isolation and diminished living is a darkness that only the strong love of God can dispel. Within that love he may live not only by means of insight and understanding, but also through faith,

a faith that re-evaluates the meaning of existence in terms of that love.

But where does one begin? The prophet Hosea counseled a fear-tormented Israel to break up her fallow ground and to seek Jehovah again. Anxiety lies beneath the surface of man's life; deep furrows and toilsome work are exacted of one who would know and answer the anxiety of existence in faith. For that requires, first of all, knowing the faith one actually lives by—the real motives that issue in one's way of life. The searching and the being searched that are required if a man is to break up his fallow ground, can be endured only within loving relations; and for the Christian, within the grace of God. It is painful to learn the truth about oneself and to be renewed beyond that knowledge. Nicodemus learned from Christ that it is like being born again with travail and pain.

The hazard involved in searching the self is deeply personal. Just as the retreat from life is an escape from personal awareness, so also to turn and face life and one's self will involve heightened and painful self awareness. Perhaps this is why so many people are content with only a mild form of Christianity. The plumbing of their depths has frightened them away from the real thing. But it is just this fear that has transformed "mild Christianity" into a demon religion in many people for whom to "be Christian" is to be rigidly proper and sterile and to exchange the Christian truth about man for a fatuous sentimentality. Genuine faith is renewed only by praying continuously the words of the Psalmist:

Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart;  
prove me, and examine my thoughts (Psalm 139:23).

#### **DEMONIC POSSESSION IN MODERN MAN**

Biblical faith is a continuing challenge to the idolatries of man. It is forever seeking the ground of men's hearts,

trying the faith by which they live. The false gods of ancient Israel and the demon possessions of modern man are brothers under the skin. They share a common weakness: they have no power to save. Indeed, the writer of Judges voiced the prophetic challenge to all idolatry with these words: "Go and cry to the gods whom you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress" (Judges 10:14). False gods, however, cannot deliver in time of distress or anxiety.

The anxiety of existence demands a faith. Worship in some form is a necessity of living. Whether or not he worships consciously, man is the kind of animal that must have meaning and ultimate concerns; even if his ultimate concern is to deny meaning. It is obvious that not all religion is included under the heading of "religion." Indeed, for many sophisticated moderns, indifference to organized religion is a fetish. Look behind that façade of unconcern and one discovers a frantic search for salvation—for a god that can save. Polytheism was the conscious problem of the ancient world, and it is the unconscious problem of our age. In the necessity of living through anxiety, man seeks the god of his salvation; and the crucial question is whether he worships idols or that God alone, who saves him by restoring him to genuine freedom and selfhood in relatedness.

Christ addressed himself to the demon possessions of his day. These false gods that took possession of and tormented the souls of many were driven out in the name of God's healing purpose. Here was beginning the mighty works of the age to come:

But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons,  
then the kingdom of God has come upon you (Luke  
11:20).

The demon possessions of modern man are the false "worships" that operate beneath the conscious surface of

his life as his answer to anxiety. These function as idols in that they demand total commitment in return for the false promise of salvation. The claims of these false worships are anonymous and not immediately evident to man, but sincere reflection and self-searching is more than likely to reveal the signs of their presence.

One sign is perfectionism, a way of life in which a person is ruthlessly intolerant of every mark of weakness. It is as if the victim had said to himself, "Without absolute perfection I cannot abide myself or others." This frantic striving to keep on top leads man inexorably to an alienation from self, as he progressively reduces the area of his living in order to maintain the fiction of impeccability. For such a person, the Sermon on the Mount and the Christian counsels to perfection lose their relation to the Kingdom of God, where judgment is joined with forgiveness; instead, they become a new moralism, rather than the basis of new covenant relation. It seems obvious that rigid perfectionism destroys the possibility of genuine relations within the self or with others. A perfectionistic mother or father cannot help being more concerned with proving the fiction that their children are superior than with really knowing and loving the children for themselves.

"Drivenness" is another sign of false worship. To be driven is to move at the impulse and command of forces alien to oneself, to act because one is forced to act, and thereby to lose one's freedom and selfhood. The loss of freedom and selfhood is always the occasion of anger; and the amount of anger in our common life is in some measure the drivenness of modern living. Karen Horney has a brilliant analysis of this aspect of our culture in her last book, *Neurosis and Human Growth*. There she traces out the manifold ways in which the destructive "search for glory" becomes the compulsive drive that robs all life of fulfillment. A wish or a need, understandable in itself, becomes a claim,

a tyrannous claim, dominating the life of its victim. The perfectionist, for instance, is driven to fulfill the claims of his rigid conscience.

But our submission to alien forces is more strikingly evident in our slavery to routine, our uneasy and uncreative use of leisure, and our inability to be alone with ourselves. A person with whom the writer was counseling experienced this feeling in a dream wherein she found herself on a ferris wheel that was "forever going up and down." These descriptive words bear significant relation to the reply of Satan in the story of Job, when the Lord asked him, "Whence have you come?"

From going to and fro on the earth,  
and from walking up and down on it (Job 1:7).

Demonic life is a dreary walking up and down the ways of this world exactly because it is motivated by a worship that knows nothing of "quietness and confidence." Demonic life is cut off from the source of renewal, from God Himself.

False worship ultimately reveals itself as a worship of the self that is at the same time contempt of the self. Man's essential relation to God in creation (the basis of his self acceptance) is broken in self-idolatry, and he hates himself precisely because he cannot save himself. Every idolatry is a "proud worship," as well as a vain worship. It is measured in brokenness and destruction for countless lives. Perhaps this fact lends weight to those words in the *Magnificat*:

He hath showed strength with his arm;  
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their  
hearts.

Idolatry arises not merely from impaired human relations, but from a broken relation between man's "I" and the "Thou" of God. It is this profound disruption that reduces man to the stature of a thing that must convert every other person into a thing, in the fruitless effort to

prove his own worth. Friendship, love, and community become possessions that, like every other object possessed, are used in his own unsuccessful search for justification. The futility of that search, while apart from God, issues in the anger that man feels against himself, which, when translated into destructive aggression and hostility, becomes a characteristic mark of this age. The ambivalence remains: self worship is also contempt of the self.

The temptation of idolatry is renewed with every generation. It is as deep in man as his own doubt, and as subtle as his pride. Only the form changes. Where yesterday men were tempted, in the picturesque translation of Moffatt of a verse from Psalm 106, "to barter God, their glory, for the image of an ox that munches grass"; today they barter God for an idol that their science makes, an image that may be only a little more refined. Idolatry enters man through pride; and for modern man, the words of Christ that if the eye is not sound, the whole body is full of darkness, goes to the heart of the matter. Man's capitulation to idolatry is foreshadowed in his ambivalence; his purity of heart is already corrupted because, as Kierkegaard put it, he does not will to be one thing: to be himself in the eyes of God. With this pervasive aspect of the temptation to idolatry in mind, we propose now to bring it into focus through the three classic temptations of Christ (Matthew 4).

In the first of these temptations, the devil issues the challenge, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." Jesus answers:

It is written,

"Man shall not live by bread alone,

but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

This incident occurs during Jesus' fast in the wilderness, when the need for food was heightened by His self-imposed discipline. It represents the temptation to give oneself over

to bodily satisfactions. The vital desires of man's life—food, sex and self-expression are not evil in themselves. They become demonic when man attempts to live by his vitality alone. Here is an idolatry widely encountered in our age.

The temptation to worship oneself as vitality is evident in our preoccupation with retaining youth, in our consuming interest in sex, food, and drink, and in that busy activity that seems to mount with our years. Let us be reminded that this idolatry is not confined to the more dramatic sins of a Don Juan or the pleasures of the primrose path! The drive behind these expressions is the same as that which keeps man forever on the move, forever seeking new conquests, although never finding the satisfactions he expects in his actual living. Who has not encountered the pathetically "good" people of our community, who live for achievements' sake, believing that "actions speak louder than words," or that "nothing succeeds like success," and whose every achievement leaves them more empty and nearer defeat. Sometimes such people are called "do gooders," but those who do the name calling can measure their own involvement in this demonic possession by looking into their own homes, where too often families are split by resentment with sons and daughters even hating their parents and their "good works" because anxiety in the service of busyness has robbed them of the parent they have never known.

Job discovered that to live is to know that there is "a warfare to man upon earth":

I am not at ease,  
nor am I quiet;  
I have no rest;  
but trouble comes (Job 3:26).

The temptation that man faces in this inescapable trouble is to take it upon himself busily to avoid it, to live sensu-

ously, to "live to the limit," rather than living through his trouble in a faith-love relation to God. Job found no other answer to his problems, but he did come to a relationship with God whom he now knew in a new way. He put it this way:

I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,  
but now my eye sees thee . . . (Job 42:5).

The anxiety behind the worship of the self, as vitality, is betrayed by the constant desire to prove oneself. Frequently, this takes the form of the anxious pursuit of "rules to live by." There is an episode in the life of Christ about which it is told that He was confronted by the bald demand for a sure formula. In the Gospel of St. John (6:28-29), the people are pictured, as asking: "What must we do, to be doing the work of God?" His answer must have been a disappointment to His hearers, as it is a disappointment to everyone who seeks to save himself by his own works:

This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.

The one thing required of the person busily engaged in proving himself, and the most difficult thing for him to give, is that he put his trust in the trustworthiness of God in Jesus Christ. For this sacrifice one must learn that nothing he can do or say will suffice when meeting and responding to God in Christ is the requirement. Such a sacrifice means death to the anxious desire for security in works. It can also mean new birth through confidence in Christ, who has been proved once and for all.

In the second temptation, Satan speaks from the high mountain and the vista of the kingdoms with all their glory:

All these will I give you,  
if you will fall down and worship me.

Jesus replies:

Begone, Satan! for it is written,  
“You shall worship the Lord your God  
and him only shall you serve.”

The temptation to live by the power and possession of things stands behind much of the self-idolatry and self-contempt in the children of this age. It is as if a man had said to himself in his innermost being, “I’ll never get by on my own. I must please people and bribe them to like me!” At heart, this is a rejection of the givenness of one’s self. It is rejection of God. One does not trust either the self God has given or God Himself. Hence, this man is caught in the frantic pursuit of possessions and services by which he hopes to keep others obligated to him. The paradox of self-worship and self-contempt is the spur behind the adulation of power in man’s life.

The temptations of power and possessions are quite evident in the rearing of our children. One learns rather early in life to place a high value on the possession of things or on the faculty for being useful to or for impressing others. Thus, the talent for manipulation becomes the means whereby one seeks satisfactions in life. But the spoiled child and the immature adult both suffer the frustrating experience that manipulation of others brings no genuine satisfaction in living. And their suffering is more than a frustration. It is a reflection of the tragic role of a sin that exchanges man’s fundamental relation to God and to others for the worship of self, a self-worship that takes the form of power for control. The radical claims of God must be set against this idolatry with the emphatic emphasis upon the words: *“and him only shalt thou serve.”*

The worship of the self as power has been dramatically illustrated in the political history of modern man. But this large canvas may obscure the more intimate role that this idolatry plays in our common life. Faust is a true child of modern history in that he gave up his soul for the knowledge

that would enable him to control others. Insofar as science has become the object of worship and the means of domination, it has followed the Faustian course. Indeed, instances of the temptation to give oneself over to the pursuit of power need not be sought beyond the boundaries of daily interpersonal relations. Every counselor is concerned with families where anxiety in the service of power has tempted the parents to dominate their children's lives with tragic results that are recognizable in broken marriages and unfulfilled lives. Manipulation either by strength or by weakness tends to reduce human relations to "I-it," where the human element disappears. In *Mrs. McThing* the playwright advances the theme that human relations cannot be walled in and protected. To treat another person as a "stick" is to become a "stick" oneself. The prohibition against covetousness in the Bible seems relevant here. It is more than an injunction against desiring a neighbor's goods. It is the recognition that man's idolatry reduces both his neighbor and himself to the status of goods and chattels. Covetousness is a vanity through which man tries to save himself by possessiveness, and its course leads inexorably to his destruction and to that of his neighbor.

In the third temptation, the devil transported Christ to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple.

If you are the Son of God, he jeered, throw yourself down; for it is written,

"He will give his angels charge of you,"  
and

"On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you strike your foot against a stone!"

Jesus answered him:

Again it is written,

"You shall not tempt the Lord your God."

It is to be noted that the devil quotes Scripture here to support his proposition! The temptation to use God for

our own purposes is the perennial attraction of magic. It is, as someone has aptly remarked, to make religion our God, rather than God our religion. It is to appropriate the prerogatives of God for ourselves in self-worship.

The lure of magic is very strong, and it is not easy to discern. There is always a chance that it stands behind our turning to religion. The crucial question is whether or not our worship frees us for a more spontaneous participation in life. The use of piety to solve personal problems may and frequently does include an attempt to bend God to our own will. The unconscious motive is evident here in a rigid anxiousness about "doing things just the right way" and in the anger that inevitably accompanies the failure of this effort to coerce God. There are countless people in our parishes, as well as in the secular congregations of community life, who are forever ready to demand of their "priests" that they make new gods when they find that the one God can not be ordered about. This is the perennial demand of a people impatient in waiting upon God. So it was with the Hebrews:

Up, make us gods, who shall go before us . . . (Exodus 32:1).

The temptation and the pressure to transform religion into magic emphasizes the necessity that priests be not only pastors, but also prophets. The prophetic word stands against every worship that takes the "name of the Lord God in vain."

The insights of modern psychology can prove helpful in our understanding of the real function that our religion serves and in clearing the way for the work of genuine faith. The hospital chaplain encounters a patient whose recovery from a simple physical injury has been impeded by emotional turmoil. In conversation he learns that the patient has assumed a religious attitude that serves as a rigid cover for feelings of guilt, derived from childhood

problems. The answer to the patient's need goes deeper than simply encouraging her to give up her unnecessary guilt feelings. It lies in the direction of helping her to find the God who, although He searches and judges us, also loves us infinitely. It is God alone, who can destroy the false patterns of religion that we fashion to meet our mistaken needs. It is God alone, who saves.

The words of the devil suggest why the temptation to false religion seems to be so deeply rooted in human behavior: man's belief in his right to be kept from hurt or harm. This attitude persists in Christianity despite the centrality of the crucifixion. It is a false belief that arrogantly assumes that God may be used for the protection of one person or group over others. Jonah represents this temptation in the Old Testament. He was sent to save the Ninevites, but because he believed that God was the exclusive possession of the Hebrews, he performed the task with some reluctance! The Ninevites' subsequent repentance brought no joy to Jonah. It, like the loss of his shady covering, infuriated him. As he sat "angry even unto death," he was shown the fundamental fallacy of his religion. He had hoarded his God as his own possession, just as he had appropriated the gourd for shade. He had labored for neither. But his own grief in the loss of the gourd is but a very pale reflection of God's infinite concern for the people of Ninevah. There is both judgment and grace in this story: judgment on the attempt to keep religion as a magic charm, grace in the infinite love of God for those that know Him not.

The insistence upon the right to be kept from hurt or harm, whether it be in the individual or in a people, is a symptom of false worship. Its center of gravity is well illustrated by the complaint of a mother whose daughter was having difficulty, the complaint that "God would let just this happen to my child." If these words do not seem widely representative, one need only reflect that many people think of their church as a club in which, as long as

dues are paid and requirements reasonably observed, the heavenly powers are obligated to protect the members from misfortune. Needless to say, such organized idolatry is always breaking down. God does not bargain with man. His grace is freely given and must be freely received. Man may always enter into loving communion with the reconciling God in Christ. In such a relation he possesses the courage to be, even in disaster.

The false worships of modern man recall again the vital significance of the fundamental Hebrew-Christian belief: one God worshipped through love in heart, soul, and mind. The false gods are expelled when the one God comes in truth. But the demon possessions of man are never exorcized except through much prayer and fasting, and ultimately only by the finger of God. That God has acted redeemerly at this crucial juncture is the basic Christian affirmation. Jesus is the Christ! Man's recovery is accomplished in that decisive action. It remains for man to claim by faith the victory over idolatries that God has wrought in the event of Christ. That event is more than an idea, more than "a cunningly devised fable," even more than a fervent hope. It is an eye witness event, something that happened in history. It is a living reality that continues to happen in the flesh and blood witness of the community of the Holy Spirit.

Secular psychiatry is also concerned with the removal of the demons that enslave man; but the spiritual vacuity that results when this is attempted apart from God may, as in Christ's parable of the swept and garnished house, invite seven more deadly spirits, so that the last state of the man is worse than the first. For the Christian reconciliation takes place in a community of relations sustained by the Holy Spirit. This is symbolized in the great affirmations of Christianity which begin: "I believe in . . .," "Our Father who . . ." The Bible and the Church are woven into the patterns of life, into the stuff of history. Within this living reality,

there is present the hope of driving out the enslaving idolatries that the anxiety of existence spawns.

#### HOLY SPIRIT COMMUNITY

While spirit is universal, the message of the New Testament is that God has come with new and abiding presence in the Holy Spirit. He dwells in the community that rejoices in His redeeming power. As we have seen, man apart from some kind of saving community destroys both himself and the spirit that is within him, "having no hope and without God in the world." The loss of real community is one of the deeper reasons why this age is so involved in running away from self. Modern man is without a home. He is cut off, belonging nowhere. Yet he is not beyond God. His final loneliness is met by God in the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. There is strength here, and the courage to face and to recover the lost self. It is obvious that self-searching is intolerable apart from some kind of community. Even the self-searching of psychotherapy must proceed within community. The deeper purpose and end of all self-knowledge is the rediscovery of man's relation to God. For that a man must turn and face himself, and the strength of the community of grace reaches out to help. In the decisive moment, however, man must decide, and in deciding for or against God, his freedom is revealed again. Pascal has said, "He who has created us without our aid cannot save us without it."<sup>8</sup>

Man's recovery of himself, his recovery of wholeness, is accomplished within community. For the Christian, that community is the gift of the Holy Spirit; it precedes man and enables him to turn from alienation to a new life in relationship. Freedom is a curse unless man has the courage to use it creatively. Humanism would seek that courage in man himself. Mysticism looks for it outside of man. In the

<sup>8</sup> Quoted by Denzil G. M. Patrick, *Pascal and Kierkegaard* (London: Lutterworth, 1947), I, 181.

biblical view, the courage necessary for freedom is based upon a faith-trust relation to God. It is both within man as the restored image of God and beyond him in the being of God. It is realized through man's participation in the Holy Spirit community.

In the biblical view, man is enabled to use his freedom only insofar as he remains in a vital faith relation to God. Freedom is neither an autonomous possession of man, nor is it a capricious gift, doled out by God when man is "good." Like Ezekiel, man is unable to stand upon his own feet and speak his own words until the spirit of God enters his receptive heart, and then he is enabled to stand and to speak. Thus by the spirit of God, man's freedom and selfhood are strengthened. Through the spirit he has the courage to be himself in the eyes of God. The prophets were thus enabled to speak to a people that were hostile to their message. And St. Paul prayed that God would grant his fellow Christians at Ephesus

. . . to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love . . . may be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:16-19).

The fullness of man's freedom and selfhood is realized in relation to God. Modern psychiatry has rightly insisted that man cannot be more responsible than his freedom permits, and that he will accept responsibility to the degree that his freedom is realized. In a community of slaves it is unrealistic to expect man to act responsibly. But in a community where men are no longer slaves, but brothers, and free by faith, the community of responsibility becomes a possibility. In the community of faith man recovers his selfhood in relation to God, and he is *free for freedom*. The characteristic action of the Christian community throughout the ages has been *eucharist*, thanksgiving, for the freedom

of the new man in Christ. The liberty of Christian man is the product of faith beyond law. Wherever Christianity has been led into the byway of moralism and salvation by "ought," it has destroyed the meaning of Christian freedom. Man's *freedom for freedom* springs from his faith-trust relation to God; it cannot be produced by moral pronouncements.

Faith must involve more than assent to a set of ideas. It means a life of trust in the larger community of the Holy Spirit. In that wide fellowship worship and prayer are the means of communication. Everyone prays in the sense that life is a constant dialogue with the ultimate concerns. But prayer, too, has its idols, which are a part of the false worships of man. We have seen how these idolatries limit and isolate man. Genuine prayer breaks through the crusty, fallow surfaces of our individual separation and draws us into the common life of God's people. Worship is fulfilled when man, in adoration of God, brings His whole creation before Him in joyful praise and thanksgiving. Christianity in a way of redeemed relations within the Holy Spirit community.

For the early Christians, *Koinonia*, their fellowship, was the means of their access to the Holy Spirit. As they entered into that community of faith, they were caught up into the new life of God's astonishing power. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was shared by many who then exercised the gifts of the Holy Spirit and "continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42, AV). The mystery of that *Koinonia* was its note of strength in sharing. The Holy Spirit comes through participation, not in isolation. It is a gift realized only in community.

The Church (*ekklesia*), as it developed, was made up of those who had been called out of the world into *Koinonia*. In the New Testament, membership in that body is by baptism, which signifies incorporation into the living body

of Christ that is the people of God. The gift of the Holy Spirit is embodied in the Church, which is the locus of God's redeeming work. St. Paul reminded the Corinthians that "by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body . . ." (I Cor. 12:13). The essence of the Christian message is that God has visited and redeemed his people, who now live from faith to faith in the "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." Lest this be misunderstood as a prideful claim for "one of the churches," it should be added that the Church in this definition embraces more than the visible church. With St. Paul we must remember that we know only "in part" and that the ultimate judgment about the boundaries of God's Church belong to Him alone. It is a peculiar form of ecclesiastical idolatry that presumes that any man or church can usurp the seat of judgment that belongs to God only. But this we do know: that where the Church continues in the Apostle's teaching and fellowship, where the Bible is read and the Word of God is received, where the sacraments are prayerfully observed and the faith is joyfully proclaimed, there the Christian experience is possible. And it is possible only in relation to such a community, for individualism and basic Christianity are opposite poles.

Modern man may have understandable hesitancy in accepting the Church he knows. From history, he has learned of its role as an agent of authoritarianism emphasizing doctrine and its acceptance as more important than vital faith-trust relations. More recently, he has seen the Church become an escape for those that would be relieved of the necessity of facing the facts of his world as it is. These sad facts cannot be minimized; they are true. But the early Church came into her own in a hostile world, not by running away from life, but by becoming in fact man's true spiritual home, the place where he could live with his world. And something of the vigor of that early Church is stirring again within Christianity as she learns that she lives in an alien world. This is evidenced by the open missionary mindedness

which is gladly facing the facts of this world. An illustration of this open mindedness is the effort of the Church to relate her sacramental life to the wholeness of man's being, as that reality has been recovered by psychosomatic medicine. A happy sign evident in many communions is the recovery of the heart of the family-parish community in corporate worship and the rediscovered relevancy of biblical faith to the actual predicament of man. The facts discovered by modern science are the revelation of God's truth when, in faith, they are rewoven into the total fabric of His world. This is a crucial task of the Church in every age.

One of the ironies of modern history is that, in his enthusiasm to throw off the restraints of the Church, man has given himself over to the false gods of this culture, whose voracious demands afford him neither peace nor community. Secular loneliness is inescapable. The spirit of secularism hauls down the flag of Christianity in the name of individualism. It lowers the horizon of faith. It leads to isolation and despair. Even in his collectivist utopias, modern man discovers not real community, but, as one observer has put it, "atomism packed tight."

Anxious and alone man stands outside the Church and demands "moral values" that can be pressed into easy-to-take capsules. His troubled mind seeks those fruits of Christianity that he cannot have, unless he is willing to take his place in the life-giving plant, which is the Church. The gifts of the Holy Spirit will belong to man again when he comes out of his barricaded isolation into the community of faith and expectancy. He that stands outside and demands salvation will never know the spontaneity of a love that rejoices in hope and is "patient in tribulation."

The people of God are called into community, and the Church is that community. Its fellowship is the place where man may recover his lost humanity. The common proclamation of faith in the Apostles' Creed involves taking a stand in that relation (*I believe in . . .*) where the Holy

Catholic Church, as well as the Holy Spirit, the forgiveness of sins and the communion of Saints are affirmed together. Here the deepest needs of man are met and fulfilled. Here the supreme fruit of sacred fellowship, *agape*, may become a living reality. Christian faith does not end with the forgiveness of sins nor with relief from anxiety. It incorporates man into an ongoing transcendent community of the forgiven and the forgiving, where in moments of faith and love he lives beyond anxiety. Thus the Church through her life and sacraments provides healing for the tragic anxiety of existence. The Holy Spirit community is man's "native land," his home, where he recovers his lost wholeness and lives through anxiety.

#### B E Y O N D D E S P A I R

It is important to emphasize that the Christian way is one of living through anxiety, rather than of attempting to escape it. The goal of life is not "peace of mind," but faith and love that live through anxiety in the peace of God. Like the early Christians, we "must through much tribulation" enter the Kingdom of God. The facts of life teach us that we shall have to be able to endure uncertainty. It is a hard lesson to learn, because despair and the loss of meaning stand behind every uncertainty when our perspective is "this-world-only." There is an interesting paradox here. We, the children of this world, are fond of thinking that we are entirely self-sufficient; but we flee from tensions and are not above accepting the answers magic offers to our problems. It is significant that people that have rejected, as too fanciful, fairy tales in which love and perseverance and grace are virtues, have instead turned to the heroes of the comic strip, radio, and television, heroes who quite often are those that succeed by superhuman, indeed magic, powers.

So far as faith is concerned, man is not a tentative animal. He must live by some faith and in a kind of community, even though both may produce only a wearisome existence.

Christian realism is skeptical about the faith and community of modern man that promises so much and yields so little. It points to his false worships and feeble attempts at community and recalls the warning of Jeremiah that "slight healing" and cries of "peace, peace" leave festering sores that require deep healing.

The lesson of despair must not be evaded: The things that belong to man's peace require that he see himself in the light of despair, before he can know the new life in God's reconciling grace. "Weep not for me," Jesus told the women of Jerusalem, "but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke 23:28, AV). Despair is not lost, if it brings one to the need of redemption. The secret of despair is that we are not left alone. Otherwise, why cry out to God? It restores us again to the realities of life in which man is man, not a shining god. Unless his faith is more than a veneer of self-satisfaction to cover his despair, he will be forever driven to seek the meaning of his life in false gods. There is but one faith that can drive out these demons, one faith that, in the face of despair and meaninglessness, provides man with as good a reason for living as for dying. This is the Christian faith which lies beyond despair and which, in loving community, makes the threats man must endure the schoolmasters to bring him closer to God.

One of these threats is the reality of guilt beyond imagined guilt. To live is to become involved in a cycle of sin and estrangement that can only lead to despairing guilt, unless it can somehow be undone. Goethe has said that human action always involves a degree of unjustness: "only the spectator can preserve his conscience." The rigorous claims of the New Testament are meant to drive man from his citadel of anxious self-concern to restored relationship with God. Psychiatry has sometimes claimed that these demands of Christianity are too great. They lay impossible burdens upon man. This charge is justified when Christianity is viewed simply as a moral exercise. Here the Sermon on

the Mount becomes either a new legalism or the occasion for mass self-deception regarding its fulfillment. Those that reduce the faith to the Beatitudes or “the Golden Rule” only should take the time required to read the Gospels in which these statements appear: It is hardly an accident that Christ’s Sermon on the Mount ends with an admonition against anxiety, which is a warning to those who busily flee from its profound searching and a counsel to seek first the Kingdom of God where relationship precedes and nurtures the moral fruits of the Kingdom.

The claims of Christianity are intolerable apart from the grace and forgiveness of God. Taken alone these claims serve only to drive man deeper into despair. Indeed, the weight of unresolved guilt is another factor that contributes to the loneliness and diminished living from which modern man suffers. It is here that the “Christian” voice is mingled with the pagan, as they cry out in chorus, “Could it not somehow be undone?” Guilt unforgiven produces an anxious self-concern that is the epitome of sin. As Christians, we must remember that forgiveness must first be experienced in ourselves, before we can extend it to others; that when Christ referred to “the least of these little ones” who need alms and forgiveness, He most certainly meant us, who receive it with greatest difficulty.

The message and the witness of Christ is that it has already been undone! It has been undone in God’s forgiving action. In Christ God has already undone the sin and removed the guilt-barrier that separates man from every possibility of genuine reconciliation. The words of the Bible that are used for forgiveness and pardon bear the original meaning of removing that which stands between. Man’s sin and guilt are “covered,” “lifted up” and “carried away.” That great obstruction has been removed. Forgiveness is more than an idea. It is an event in history. The word has been passed down to us that the way is clear. We must join the throng that sings and marches on! For if one would

know the deep joy of that song, he must become a part of that army that moves forever into the presence of God with glad and thankful hearts. Forgiveness is something to be shared in community, where it becomes a living reality that re-creates humanity.

Judgment is another source of despair. Whether we call it the wrath of God or the anger of man, we know the meaning of judgment. Surely, the history of this generation has been written in wrath. As for Job, life has become for many a burden in which they are judged without quite knowing why. When man dispenses with the ultimate judgment that belongs to God alone, he himself becomes a merciless judge, who destroys both himself and his neighbor. The anxiety of modern man involves him in a never-ending cycle of judgment, wrath, and despair. The poet Auden speaks of the brooding "malcontents who might have been":

. . . self-judged they sit,  
Sad haunters of Perhaps . . .<sup>4</sup>

The amount of hostility and aggression which is readily expressed in contemporary life is some measure of the weight of self-judgment and the consequent unlivable life.

Judgment is not without its lesson for man. For all his weariness with life, Job perceived that God cares in that he judges:

. . . And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one,  
And bringest me into judgment with Thee?

For Job, the experience of judgment was the occasion for the rediscovery of his relation to God. Here is a clue that points beyond the morass of wrath that grips modern man. The basic trouble lies in man's relation to God. No man escapes judgment. Existence and the possibility of freedom always produce crisis or judgment. Man's effort to escape

<sup>4</sup> Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*, p. 10. Used by permission of the publisher.

judgment amounts to an effort to flee from God and, thus, to escape the wrath of God. But the good news of Christianity is that while man is yet a sinner, trapped in his own wrath, God demonstrates his love in Christ to restore man to that fundamental relation. Indeed, God's mighty acts of grace in the biblical story bear the significance that God's judgment is His love and His love is judgment. These belong together. When either is separated from the other, a demon religion flourishes. *Agape* is both the means of man's self-fulfillment and a judgment upon every premature self-realization in sin. Love is a perpetual source of judgment upon every partial fulfillment of man under *law* or "works-righteousness," and it is the means of man's renewal beyond the dead-end of his own effort to justify himself. The Gospel states that Christ comes in the flesh, not once, nor merely in a second time, but that He comes again. He comes in every moment, and his coming breaks into every historical moment with the Word of God made Flesh. In that coming we are judged, but for redemption. Man's relation to God in love is both the source of his existence and the means whereby he may use his freedom to fulfill his selfhood. Without that relation and the community that nurtures it, wherein the grace of God heals the broken and completes the incomplete, man's freedom is cursed with destructive judgment. In every crisis or judgment God makes it possible for man, through forgiveness and reconciliation, to enter into the new creation while still living in the old world.

Death is the final absurdity of life apart from faith. It fills life with the dread of a meaningless journey to nowhere. It has become a matter of increasing concern to both psychiatry and theology that the fact of death is not met with honesty in this culture. It is either an occasion for much sentimentality, or it is repressed and avoided by curtained fear. It is interesting to note that De Tocqueville observed in 1835 that American preoccupation with the things of this world seemed to cover a fear of death. Apparently

death is the Achilles heel of a confident and pragmatic culture. Its finality seems so unsportsmanlike! The players are ejected before the final outcome is known, and everyone must enter this arena of confidence testing. Death becomes the symbol of meaninglessness in a people whose hopes have been anchored in this world only. Behind modern man's fruitless search for peace and for understanding in psychiatry and in new cults, there lies the threat of meaninglessness and the unanswered problem of death.

Man in anxiety finds it almost impossible to face the fact of death. His loved ones "pass away," and he and his friends enter a conspiracy to hide the facts. His funeral practices become the means of covering up the reality, rather than an aid to facing the truth honestly. The investigation of Lindemann and Fairbanks, at the Massachusetts General Hospital, of extended grief cases growing out of a disastrous fire tends to show that the successful handling of grief and emotional reorientation are greatly hindered by attitudes and religious practices that fail to face death as a fact.<sup>5</sup> In the Gospel of St. John (chapter 11), we see the reflections of the way in which the early Church handled this matter. Jesus is reported, in the story of Lazarus, first as saying that Lazarus' "sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God," a statement which some of the disciples apparently took to mean that Lazarus was not dead, but asleep. It became necessary for Christ to say "Lazarus is dead." The subsequent account of the raising of Lazarus should not hide the fact that Jesus set himself against the sentimentalism of evading death, by confusing it with sleep or by obscuring it with pat answers. ("I know that he shall rise again on the resurrection at the last day.") The raising of Lazarus then gave emphasis to Jesus' words:

I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

<sup>5</sup> Lindemann, Erich, "Symptomatology and Management of Acute Grief," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, CI (July, 1944), pp. 141-48.

The implications for the Christian community were clear: Even death cannot be used as an escape from the encounter with Him, in whom there is both resurrection and life. It is a peculiar form of pride in the living—perhaps even a *sickness unto death*—when anxious concern for the dead betrays an unwillingness to meet the Lord of life and death *now*. The early Church learned its lesson well, and beyond the days of God's mighty acts in Jesus, the ancient practice was to accept the fact of death, meeting it with a faith which knew that nothing could separate man from the love of God whom he had known in Christ. The Book of Common Prayer retains this emphasis when the Church gathers in the presence of death. The dead are committed to the earth with prayers and a recital of Christian faith in psalm, scripture, and creed wherein man's response embraces death—even death—within the community of resurrection:

I believe in . . . the Resurrection of the body:  
And the Life everlasting.

For the Christian the threat of death, like every other experience of anxiety, is met within a corporate fellowship that reaches beyond the tragic conditions of this life where sin has wrought the “sickness unto death.” His life in the Church is a constant reminder to the Christian that Christ came to heal and restore that which has been lost in sin. The buoyancy and strength of the Church in every age lies in the reality of life everlasting *now*:

We know that we have passed out of death into life,  
because we love the brethren (I John 3:14).

In every absolution for the penitent, in the words with which the sacrament of Christ's body and blood is administered, indeed, in the very fact of the sacraments the Church looks beyond this *sickness unto death* to life everlasting—and that as a present reality. It was in this spirit that St. Ignatius

of Antioch described the eucharistic breaking of bread as "the medicine of immortality."

The Christian stress on resurrection, rather than on immortality, further emphasizes the meaningfulness of existence as man has known it in the body. St. Paul spoke of the "spiritual-body" with which the Christian is clothed beyond life in the flesh, and this paradoxical expression is a way of conveying the Christian truth that God-recovered-wholeness in this life and beyond has relevance to the struggle in the flesh that we know *now*. The idea of immortality is easily corrupted into a way of escape into infinity, into a kind of second round of this life without the disturbances of real existence. In our culture it has become too often associated with the sentimental notion that something in man—his soul, his true self—does not have to die. But the Christian view is clear in insisting that, like Adam, all men must die. Those that are made alive in Christ do not escape death, but their *sickness unto death* is removed in that faith-trust community of resurrection. In this light the commitment of the self to that abiding community, the taking of one's stand in the risk of faith is but another way of losing one's life *to find it*.

#### SUMMARY

The "new being" in Christ is actual evidence that history is meaningful and that the Kingdom of God is beginning to come in Christian history. Throughout the years, Christ has offered a hearty, "Go thy way!" to those restored to wholeness in faith. This may account for that remarkable note of joy that has characterized the work and worship of those whose service is perfect freedom. The end of Christian living, as of faith and worship, is wholeheartedness:

We hymn while we sow  
And sing while we plough.

The impending realization of the Kingdom of God is another anxiety—the creative anxiety that presses for realization in the process of history. The Church, insofar as she is the genuine community of grace and the locus of God's Kingdom, is the answer to anxiety and despair, for here there may be perplexity, "but not in despair." Here the community of anxiety is translated into the fellowship of faith and love.

Christian faith relates to the deepest needs of man: to anxiety, to the threat of meaninglessness, and to bitter separation. It brings man into holy fellowship and sustains him in suffering and death. In that holy fellowship man and his dread fears are embraced in the imperishable love and mercy of God.

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